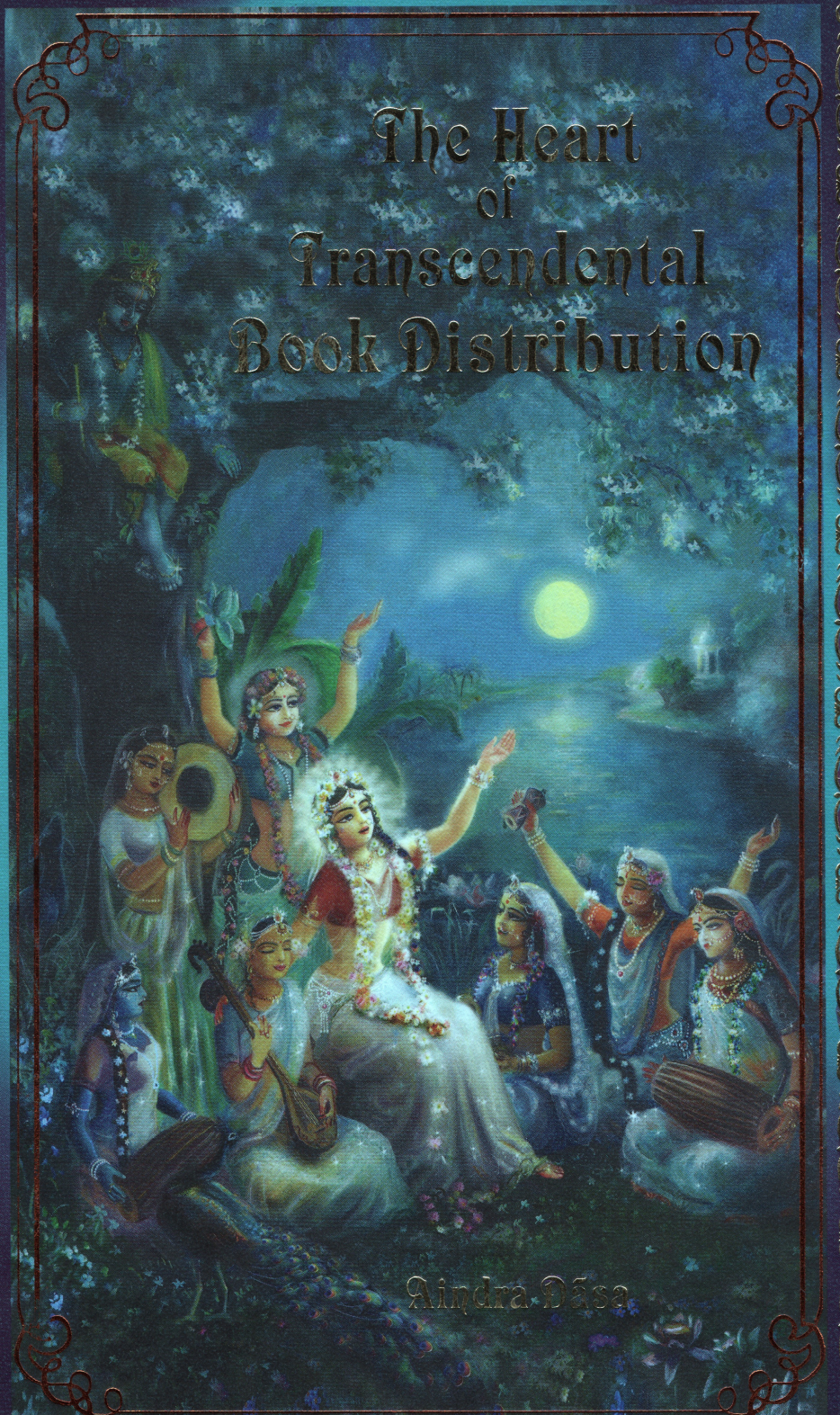
The Heart of Transcendental Book Distribution



Aindra Dāsa

The Heart of Transcendental Book Distribution

Experience Burns Brighter than Imagination

A Dialectic Synthesis
of the Correlative Dynamics of
Internal and External
Pure Devotional Principles

Aindra Dāsa

Voice of Vraja

Dedication

This disquisition is dedicated to my beloved spiritual master, Nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedanta Swami Mahārāja Prabhupāda, and all the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* down to the present day who mercifully took the trouble to present volumes of both ancient and modern transcendental literatures aimed at inculcating upon a most degraded and suffering humanity the inestimable treasure of *vraja-bhakti-rasa*.

Acknowledgement

Several years ago, upon completing a major part of this treatise, I decided that I had better shelve the thing, despite my deep conviction about the need for this dimension of open and frank dissertation in contemporary Vaiṣṇava society. I was thinking that perhaps the best place for it would be in a *grantha-samādhi*. After all, Śrīla Prabhupāda had requested me to write a book. He didn't say anything about taking it to the press. I thought it better to safeguard the peaceful prosecution of my *bhajana* by avoiding the likelihood of provoking certain anticipated institutional and interpersonal hostilities toward myself. Perhaps after I'm dead and gone someone would unearth the manuscript and publish it as an assortment of novel Aindra-isms to be circulated among the curious. Otherwise, instead of shelving it, another idea was to author it incognito under a pen name. Subsequently, however, in a dream, I asked Śrīla Prabhupāda whether he had any occasion to go through my book to which he replied, "We will see it when it is published." This indicated to me his intention that the book should not only be written but published as well. I consider it Kṛṣṇa's kind arrangement that a number of sober-minded, pure-hearted Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavīs came forward to selflessly assist me in the endeavor to produce this work. I am ever grateful to these individuals who sacrificed so much of their time and energy to help me. I only regret that, in a devotional society meant to instill fearlessness and individual thoughtfulness in its members, the atmospheric conditions are such that devotees opt to remain anonymous so as to circumvent the risk of being barbarously burned at the stake by the institutional powers-that-be for exercising their God-given right to freedom of pure devotional expression. Anyway, Kṛṣṇa knows who they are, and I pray for His unreserved blessings upon them.

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Foreword

Some transcendental literatures are meant to be loudly recited and discussed in the public forum. Although pointing to the highest plateau of spiritual realization while maintaining a continuity of consequence in the lives of the most elevated Vaiṣṇavas, they basically provide an introductory course designed to instill a prerequisite foundational regard for topics of transcendence in the hearts of those yet to achieve a foothold on the path of unalloyed devotion. Vaiṣṇava writings of a more intimate category, on the other hand, given the esoteric nature of their focus, are meant to be privately relished and discussed among more qualified individuals who have already developed a strong and determined appreciation for the true nature of Kṛṣṇa as the supreme enjoyer. It would be inappropriate to acquaint people who have yet to be divested of their long-standing envy of the Lord with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's most intimate *līlās* without first philosophically establishing them in the principles of *prema-dharma*. That one should not cast one's pearls before swine in no way suggests, however, that books of an esoteric nature should never be written and/or made available to benefit the faithful. Many authorized Vaiṣṇavas such as Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, Jayadeva Gosvāmī, Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Rāmānanda Rāya, Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, Kavi-karṇapūra, Ramai Ṭhākura, Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī, Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, and more recently Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and others have poetically penned numerous literary works divulging the intimate pastimes of the Lord of Vraja, their own sacred aspirations for divine loving service, and the sublime,

confidential process of spontaneous devotional practice for the sake of posterity. In this morbid world, apparently on the verge of corporately imposed global tyranny, such literature affords to the serious student of *bhakti-yoga* an immense shelter, a tremendous source of solace and spiritual inspiration. This piece, harmonious with the perfect conclusions of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, should be sagaciously distinguished as belonging to the more intimate category of transcendental literature. Thus, reference to any part of it in the course of an open discussion would best be done with the reader's mature discretion.

The author of this book has ventured to present his own personal insights into the realm of the Absolute with a view to demonstrate for the benefit of the broad-minded individual the tangible tie between the practical performance of *mahā-mantra-saṅkīrtana* and the vital internal realization of one's constitutional *vraja-svarūpa*. Reading carefully, the sincere pure devotional candidate will clearly ascertain the true purpose of transcendental book distribution and will be favorably impelled to recognize the vigorous performance of the *yuga-dharma* as the only viable solution to the problems of life in a world fraught with tensions of every description. Wishing well to one and all, we pray the sober reader will gain great spiritual profit, redoubled inspiration, and the potency required for the effective practice and preaching of unadulterated Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The Publishers

Introduction

All glories to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga! All glories to the thunderous congregational chanting of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's Holy Names! All glories to the swan-like pure devotees of the Lord!

The great necessity in the forward march of any growing religio-cultural institution is to recognize, encourage, responsibly guide, and positively facilitate the inner spiritual development of the society's progressive pure devotional aspirants. This treatise strives in its own unique way to inspire a revolution of understanding. It attempts to deepen the self-searching thoughtfulness essentially required to bridge the apparent dichotomy between a *sādhaka's* inward *bhajana* and outward preaching by illustrating the relative importance of each, as well as their interrelation. Those fortunate souls who absorb intimately this message will find the pathway to the highest regions of *kṛṣṇa-prema* clearly open to them, whereas those unfortunates who turn from this message, preferring to attach themselves to shallow, self-aggrandizing materialistic modes of devotion, will find their path plagued with obstruction. We sincerely hope to at least touch the hearts of a fortunate few. That alone would be the hallmark of our success and a source of immense satisfaction.

This small volume will be well regarded by purified clear-headed individuals who are thoroughly honest. Narrow-souled superficialists or spiritually maladroit, externally oriented *prākṛta-bhaktas* of meager metaphysical or internal devotional acumen will have to muster the requisite spiritual integrity to deeply enter into the spirit of this dissertation. The subject matter of this book, like the highly elevated topics revealed in the later cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* should not be intruded upon by the ineligible, hypocritical, corrupt, or envious. If the boot impacts, promptly close the book.

In alluding to various potential and kinetic religio-organizational irregularities in the course of this discourse, we aim not to rudely impute any wickedness to any individual or body of individuals. Rather, the objective is to practically illustrate how a serious devotional candidate must, when required, transcend institutional atmospheric conditions as a down-to-earth expression of the determination to achieve spiritual perfection, keeping the ultimate mission of guru and Kṛṣṇa in view. In other words, all things considered, there is no excuse for failure in fulfilling the human mission. Barring the overreliance on institutional ethos, *sādhakas* may certainly in all circumstances advance both the internal and external culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness – perhaps not so much because of, but rather in spite of, the institution with all of its inevitable shortcomings and tribulations. In other words, ultimately, we have only ourselves to blame for our lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

What need is there for any further introductory elaboration? It is as it is. Generously remitting the numerous literary imperfections herein, simply open your heart and allow the substance of this presentation to transport your inner-dimensional quantum beyond the confines of vapid ecclesiastico-conservative conventionalism to a Kṛṣṇa conscious paradigm of enriched profundity. Hare Kṛṣṇa!

First Heartfelt Effusion

First Heartfelt Effusion

My dear Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara! Crying at the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, one very fallen and destitute soul humbly offers to You the following unrestrained stream of prayerful outpourings for Your kind and considerate audience.

My dear beloved Lordships! Let me have not only this one body with only one head upon which are placed only two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and one mouth in which I find only this one pathetic tongue.

Let me have not only this one dead body upon which I find only one clumsy cranium wherein we may assume there be at least one exiguous lump of inert grey matter.

Let me have not only this one frail figure from which extend only two sluggish legs and two feeble arms with no more than one leisurely hand on the end of each.

Let me be not only this single insignificant someone with but this one heart, one life, and one sub-atomic soul to dedicate most inadequately to Your urgently required large-scale distribution of transcendental literatures.

If You wish to offer me any benediction, then please let me have hundreds and thousands, nay, even millions and billions of stout and strong bodies, either all at once or one after another or both.

On each body let me have hundreds, thousands, even millions of heads, each with hundreds of eyes and noses, thousands of ears, and millions of mouths, each endowed with billions of fabulously fortunate tongues.

Moreover, let me have trillions of most capable brains and innumerable hale, hardy, and enthusiastic legs, arms, hands, hearts, and happy selves to fully dedicate to the earnest service of Your ministrative task of worldwide transcendental book distribution.

What is the use of a soul who cannot expand into thousands of beings, each having millions of bodies? What is the use of having million of bodies if each body doesn't have billions of heads?

What is the use of each body having billions of heads if each head doesn't have trillions of brains and trillions of mouths with trillions of gracious tongues in each?

What is the use of having trillions of brains if each brain doesn't command quadrillions of intelligences with which to find the novel ways and means to drop zillions of transcendental time-bomb books into the laps of the fallen conditioned souls?

What is the use of having innumerable legs, arms, hands, hearts, lives, and geniuses if everyone and everything is not wholly dedicated to the service of Your mission to inundate the entire planet with zillions upon zillions of transcendental literatures eulogizing Your unlimited names, forms, qualities, and pastimes in Your limitlessly divine supramundane realm of eternity, knowledge, and bliss – Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma?

My dear Śrī Śrī Rādhe-Śyāma! What is the use of having innumerable hands, each distributing transcendental literatures by the billions and trillions, if as an outcome of it all, not even one soul becomes Your fully self-realized, pure, unalloyed *kevala-mādhurya-premika* devotee?

What is the use of billions of brains scheming to optimize the printing and proliferative dissemination of billions upon trillions of transcendental literatures if even one soul with even only one body with merely one head with but a single mouth with just the one tongue could not even come to the position of, at least even just only but once, relishing the immortal nectar of Your pure Holy Name (*śuddha-nāma*) which is fully inclusive of Your sublime, internal spiritual potencies?

What would be the use of distributing millions upon billions upon trillions of sublime *rasa*-saturated scriptures if, as a result of all the hustle and bustle, not even a single soul attains the

fruit of *vraja-prema*, *vastu-siddhi*, the ultimate perfection of gaining Kṛṣṇa's direct shelter in the *bhauma-līlās* as a follower of the damsels of Vṛndāvana, beyond the hope against hope suppositional domain of wishful thinking?

If as a consequence of distributing countless billions of Your transcendental literatures one could not ultimately realize the perfection of one's *sthāyi-bhāva* in one of the five primary *rasas* befitting Your loving service in the beautiful land of Vraja, what would be the actual accomplishment?

What a folly if, while incessantly promulgating hundreds of thousands upon billions, trillions, or even innumerable quadrillions of small, medium, big, and *mahā* big books to boot for billions of lifetimes, one does not bother to advance one's internal devotional eligibility (*adhikāra*) in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to triumphantly deserve entrée into Your *bhauma-līlās* for the real attainment of one's *sac-cid-ānanda-siddha-deha* as a *vraja-gopa* or *gopī*!

What a perfidy if, by broadcasting countless volumes and volumes of transcendental scriptures, not even one thoughtful book distributor could fortunately gain the essential penetrating insight to deeply discover the esoteric truths behind the blackish (Kṛṣṇa) letters on all those whitish (Rādhā) pages!

To what avail are millions of bodies with millions upon billions upon trillions of heads, eyes, ears, noses, mouths, tongues, brains, feet, legs, arms, and hands – all simultaneously serving to distribute millions upon billions upon trillions upon quadrillions of unlimited transcendental literatures all over the world, nay, all over the universe, anywhere and everywhere, immediately and incessantly forevermore – if even one pure-hearted book distributor could not verily gain, by mature, intensified *hari-nāma-bhajana-ruci*, the momentous realization that, in truth, our only real business is to sit in Your holy lands of Māyāpura and Vṛndāvana and constantly chant Your self-same *prema-nāma*?

What is the use of it all, if we don't recognize that the purpose of our book distribution is to encourage as many others as possible to become pure-hearted, fully self-realized *niṣkiñcana bhajanānandīs* who are the fittest to propagate the Holy Name by their ecstatic performances of *prema-rasa-maya-nāma-saṅkīrtana* which forever shines as the supreme *jaiva-dharma* of every *jīva* without exception?

What would be the use of it all, if we could not become factually freed from the insanity of not clearly knowing who we really are in terms of the intricacies of our ultimate, intrinsic, eternal spiritual identity (*vraja-svarūpa*)?

What would be the use, if no one could become enlightened beyond the very vague notion of being a transmigrating, ten-thousandth-of-a-hair-tip, subatomic Brahman particle floating around on the life airs of a temporary, therapeutically engaged, superficially designated, rotting corpselike defecating bag of bones masquerading as a so-called man, woman, *brahmacārī, gṛhastha, sannyāsī, vāntāśī, brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya*, pot washer, *pūjāri*, temple president, G.B.C., *guru*, devotee, or even (hold my tongue) eminently exalted book distributor?

My dear Lordships! What is the use of constructing hundreds and thousands of pompously opulent temples, worshiping thousands and millions of grandiosely ornamented Deities, distributing umpteen zillions of books, (mis)managing millions and billions of bucks, filling billions and trillions of bellies, and congregating a society of hundreds of thousands of semi-conscious squabbling neophytes, if even one soul amidst the menagerie could not ultimately achieve the supremely privileged maid-service of the treasures of Your lotus feet as You endlessly enjoy Your transcendental *nikuñja-līlās* in Your eternally resplendent realm of Vraja-dhāma?

My dearmost beloved Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhe-Śyāma! If, however, as a result of all such laborious efforts even just one fortunate soul could somehow or other by Your unbounded special

causeless mercy finally, even if after billions and trillions of lifetimes of devotional struggle, attain that most cherished goal of life, then by all means, please let there be thousands and millions of "*bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*" printing presses, each producing millions and billions of transcendental literatures describing Your unlimited names, forms, qualities, and *mādhurya-līlās* in the sweetest of all sweetest lands, Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

If in the last, even just a single person consequently becomes Your consummately pure unalloyed *vraja-gopa* or *gopī*, serving to further exhilarate Your already limitlessly expanding ocean of transcendental bliss, then let thousands and millions of transcendental book distributors each with billions of intelligences find trillions of newer and newer innovative methods of inducing quadrillions of conditioned souls to take to the process of hearing pure, nectarean *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.

My dear beloved Śyāmasundara! You are the ultimate impetus behind all events in the three worlds. Please let hundreds of thousands of book distributors each distribute by the millions and billions while tolerating all types of tribulations if in due course even one of them can come to clearly realize by practical experience the integral correlation between the external activity of propagating Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the world and the internal culture of the selfless *bhāvas* of the *vraja-gopīs*, who relish ten million times the happiness of their own meetings with You by making the arrangements for others to get the happy chance to have Your delightful company.

Let thousands and millions of externally oriented *prākṛta-bhaktas* fill the atmosphere with endless streams of *prajalpa*, faultfinding, backbiting, and fratricidal bickering, on top of all the petty institutional and interinstitutional wrangling and war – what do we care for it?

Let the over-intelligent, doggedly resorting to materially contrived managerial stratagems, injudiciously undermine the

essential principle of keeping single-minded confidence in the lucid instructions of the institutional Founder-*ācārya*; they'll have to learn the hard way – as will the attendantly implicated!

Let hundreds of heedless *sannyāsīs* and *guru*-figureheads plunge from their pompous pedestals owing to their often sentimentally justified, inappropriately frequent, and overextended proximity in dealings with their female disciples and so on. Why should we lament or bother ourselves to in any way condemn or condone; these things are going on – and on – and will continue to go on and on and on . . . Trust no future however pleasant.

Let the upper-organizational oligarchy essay to save face by repeatedly rehashing their clandestine attempts to cloak the pitiable transgressions of the institutionally rubber-stamped *guru*-figureheads. Let them, on the plea of "protecting" the "faith" of their unwary disciples, in the name of service to the Absolute Truth, perpetuate the farcical facade of Guruji's infallibility while groping for patchwork reformatory measures, lest there be appurtenant embarrassment for all concerned. Oh well, anyway. All glories to Kali-yuga! What could we expect? Hari bol! God helps those who help themselves. Man is the architect of his own misfortune. Let destiny prevail. We can fool some of the people – some of the time, right? It all comes out in the wash.

Let the rather foppish, high-flying *svāmīs*, intent on compelling the purses of the prosperous *prākṛta-bhaktas*, sublimate their zeal for lordly grandeur, affluence, and fanfare on the plea of *yukta-vairāgya* – ostensibly in the interest of Lord Gaurāṅga's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Hmm . . .

Let the weak-hearted, ill-advised, or reckless religio-institutional administrators, beguiled by the prospects of amplified economic might, sightlessly prostitute or inelegantly abandon all managerial scruples in deference to the non-devotional demands of spiritually indigent neophytes of monetary magnetism. So much for the brahminical culture of candor and simplicity; it shall faze us not.

Let multitudes of deceitful *dharma-dhvajīs*, to conceal their actual reprehensible intents, masquerade as awesome mentors of the *Bhāgavata* in order to furtively milk the petty gross and subtle material assets of the *ācārya's* institution under the pretext of acquiring "spiritual opulences" by the grace of God! Let them all "enjoy" and suffer according to the sweet will of providence. We shall be thrilled to pieces – at the same time much aggrieved.

Let the determinately shallow superficialists cosmetically manage to farcically project a prodigiously meretricious institutional semblance of forthright Kṛṣṇa consciousness while duplicitously concealing the relentless tenacity of their own steel-framed hearts. Let them obsequiously buff the "golden cage" institutional body as they insensibly disregard the vital nourishment of the "songbird" *sampradāyic* soul.

Let the respectability and trustworthiness of the institutional "leadership" go to hell. Our eternal constitutional personal loving relationship shall never be contingent upon nor thwarted by any of this.

He Rādhe-Śyāma! The plastic, put-on felicitous social niceties of polished cultural urbanity hardly constitute nor necessarily evince internally developed pure devotional excellence. Godless meat-eating demons also effectively train their utterly materialistic corporate personnel to politely or hospitably interrelate with forged, highly refined deferential suavity. Are they too to be lauded as being spiritually advanced? Animals are also seen to cordially welcome their friends and relatives – and ward off their adversaries.

Let the Grand High Exalted Mystic Institutional Control Monsters allege their high-handed, spuriously assumed, cliquish inheritance of the *sampradāya's* material and spiritual legacy to patronizingly toss a scrap or two to the most servile of their pathetically ambitious bootlicking sycophants. Smiling mildly, we shall look on with casual indifference.

Let them have their big, big buildings; big, big bank balances; and big, big managerial agenda. Let them have their thousands of neophyte disciples, their lordly dominions, and their hollow charade of being more dazzlingly divine than at all creditable. All that glitters is not gold. They are not at all enviable. Let them have their airs of being empowered world preachers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Respecting them from a distance and praying for their spiritual welfare, I, meekly admitting my inability to brandish any of the above, shall have nothing but the resolve to constantly chant the Holy Name in the sacred dust of Vraja. And I bless to fall into humblest disrepute and utter material ruination anyone who in anyway endeavors to dissuade me.

What does it really matter that hundreds and thousands of exploitative neophyte religio-organizational opportunists jockey for positions, more or less fraudulently establishing themselves as "illustrious" "leaders" of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement on various levels to pursue their sundry ulterior motives while having not even the slightest genuine greed for the inestimable treasure of *vraja-bhakti-rasa*. I say, "Bravo!" if, as a result of having distributed millions of transcendental literatures all over the world, we can even hope to find just one unpretentious, truly elevated, fully enlightened *rasika* Vaiṣṇava amidst the veritable mess we've made of everything.

He Rādhe-Śyāma! Let the brutish *nāma-aparādhīs*, goaded by a lingering appetite for the foul fruits of *bhukti* and *mukti*, even after so much graceful guidance, remain ever attached to whatever little *lābha*, *pūjā*, and *pratiṣṭhā* they can manage to eke out from their ostentatious show of allegiance to the cause of transcendental book distribution. We shall not be impressed.

Let the benighted, pushy, audaciously puffed-up, mischief-mongering egoistic vixens, wishing to spitefully dance on the heads of the *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs* to gratify their inflated personal and extended sense of self-importance, improvidently misconceive,

abort, abandon, nay, even ever so much as vociferously revile the all-round salutary shelter of Vedic cultural ethics on the pretext of Vaiṣṇavī social equality. Ugh!

Let thousands of unrelenting, materially anchored semi-*bhaktas* pursue their overwhelming concern for wholesale systematic institutional social development. The birds, beasts, and insects also cry for food, shelter, and sex satisfaction. Are they not provided for?

Let the sanctimonious religio-institutional organizationists treacherously robbed of their resolute faith in the all-attractiveness of *kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana* blunderingly adulterate the precepts of the *ācāryas*, on the plea of enhanced public appeal, by insisting on a watered-down outward display of sophistication in lieu of widespread ecstatic chanting and dancing. We doubt they will ever be very successful.

Let the mundane, *kali-cela* pseudo *kīrtana-kārīs* most irresponsibly exploit the *saṅkīrtana* performances to purposefully augment their own name, fame, and sex appeal, like yowling cats bewailing the want of their mates. Ha! The joke's on them.

Let thousands and thousands of cripple-minded *gṛha-medhīs* and *gṛhasthas* with their womenfolk have license for the sordid sex life. Let them beget tens of thousands of grossly misled, druggy, sense-gratifying "ex-*gurukulī*" ingrates and the likes of them. It is of no earth-shaking consequence.

We shall applaud their grand success if even one soul amidst all of these somehow or other finds the supreme shelter declared in all the *bhakti-śāstras* – the succulently nectarous, ambrosial mellow sweetness of Your *prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana-rasa*.

Let thousands of novice – and also seasoned – book distributors priggishly presume themselves to be glorious *goṣṭhy-ānandī* evangelic angels. Let thousands of imitative, half-baked quasi-devotional sentimentalists conceitedly pose to impersonate highly elevated *paramahaṁsa-nirjana-bhajanānandīs*, while having

neither depth of unalloyed devotional insight nor accomplished worldly disinterest. All would do well to understand that the best *goṣṭhy-ānandī*, and also the best *bhajanānandī*, is the *niṣkiñcana-bhajanānandī* who comes out from the depths of his profound *rasika* absorption in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to share his realizations for the benefit of others, both by precept and by personal example.

Who cares whether or not anybody really went to the moon? In the end, what damn bit of difference does it make? Still, we would do well to always remember – Authority does not constitute truth. Truth constitutes authority.

Who cares whether or not I said that he said that she said that they said that . . . who the hell knows what anyone actually said anyway? Human life is much too short for any of this.

Who cares for the skepticism of the skeptics?

Who cares whether or not any stool-passing creature of this world would be bothered to seriously understand or appreciate our heartfelt feelings about anything? Did we come to this world to win a popularity contest?

Who cares who puts whose stick in whose hole? Ultimately, we must all fly our own airplane. Why waste our invaluable time on the absurdities of the materially engrossed?

Who the hell cares who becomes the next Rāvaṇa of institutional mismanagement? God will have to sort that out. The only perfect management is in Vaikuṇṭha anyway.

Who the hell cares what designer color the bathroom tiles in our ritzy little "*bhajana-kuṭīras*" shall be? Is there anyone among us who is not on the verge of death? Better to sell off all the marble and classy bathroom tiles, and print books.

He Rādhe-Śyāma! What the hell do we care if the incorrigibly infantile, bigotedly authoritarian, ego-warring power mongers crassly arrogate to themselves, on the plea of autocratic disciplic prerogative, "indubitable" theocratic predominance? Let them, under the banner of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, with their presumptuous,

often unduly oppressive, superciliously inconsiderate unilateral sense of communication and cooperation, rather coercively, nay, even menacingly demand absolute, fear-based genuflection. They would really prefer to suffocate any atmosphere conducive to more genial, free flowing spontaneous devotional inspiration, than, on the basis of perceivable degrees of genuine spiritual illumination, reasonably evoke the actual love and trust required for advanced reciprocal interpersonal devotional dealings. Let them, scarcely conceding to the broader tenet of unity in diversity, at least hope to gradually, at long last, purify, in due course of the dovetailing process, their long-lingering ardor for imperial eminence and the intoxication of totalitarian controllership. This must eventuate, of course, at the expense of the subjected underdog's salubrious exercise of self-confidence, self-reliance, self-fulfillment, self-expression, and individual initiative pertaining to the personally responsible prosecution of unconstrained preferential pure devotional service. All glories to the small-minded, hollow, politically absorbed, false-ego-gratifying, unjustifiably arrogant, boorishly cut-throat Machiavellian "Hare Kṛṣṇa" overlords! Come what may, they are, no doubt, serious and "well intended" in their own persuasion that the iron-fisted "might" of skin-deep religio-institutional managerial "empowerment" in and of its own makes right.

Anyway, Śrī Śrī Rādhe-Śyāma, no one is all bad. The path to hell is paved with good intentions. Be that as it may, all is well that ends well. Isn't that nice! In truth, it is neither my intention nor is it my duty to fault or flatter anyone. There are advanced and substandard people everywhere. It is not my concern to sit around second-guessing the consciousness of others.

Where quasi-Kṛṣṇa-conscious sophistry supplants genuine pure devotional *siddhānta*, where the condescending disempowerment syndrome or roguish despotism masquerades as "authorized" Kṛṣṇa conscious leadership, any array of personal calamity or socioreligious anomaly would anything but dissuade an earnest

aspirant from the progressive current of internal devotional amelioration. We could hardly think to turn back the tide of Kali's influence anymore than we could stop a thunderhead from storming during the rainy season. Simply hold up your umbrella, depend on Kṛṣṇa, and sally forth.

It is natural to notice so many oppressive evils and perversities; after all, we're in the material world. Moreover, Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults. What else could be expected? The threefold miseries are there. We will always be harassed in so many ways by so many problems. Even if we notice the problems and even if others deny their various idiosyncrasies or decline to address their problems realistically due to a lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness or whatever, what real difference does it make from the absolute perspective? Everyone and everything either directly or indirectly serves the absolute purpose of the Supreme. At some point in the course of eternity everyone will have his or her better day. Meanwhile, we hope for the best, expect the worst, and learn to transcendentally adjust our mind-set. We could hardly expect to reform all the ignoramuses of the world. Reformists who think there is scope for such should try to recognize the need to reform their very outlook which prompts them to think in such terms. At least we ourselves should not be ignoramuses and lose our own focus on the unalloyed devotional objective. Then we may hope to be of some substantial value, *sādhu-saṅga*-wise.

We must certainly acknowledge any measure of spiritual progress achieved by individuals under the circumstances impressed upon them in the course of the current lifetime. That anyone is making any spiritual advancement at all in this Age of Kali is a miracle. Ultimately that is in the hands of Providence. How purely one responds to life's situations will depend on one's level of *pāramārthika-śraddhā* based on previously accumulated *nitya-sukṛti*. Every conditioned soul under the influence of the modes of material nature is fallible, prone to fall-down and offense.

Those who come forward on any level to help the *ācāryas* fight the war against *māyā* are glorious. Even if they are lost in battle, temporarily falling away in various ways and for various reasons, they are nevertheless glorious, at least to some extent. Their eventual progress through the labyrinth of conditional existence to the soul's final stage of spiritual perfection is ultimately Kṛṣṇa's lookout. Still, in all soberness, if we ourselves actually want to permanently solve the problems of life, if we seriously want to attain the goal of our *bhajana*, if we want to ascend to the terrace of *prema* and go back to Godhead by the end of this very lifetime, then we really have to surmount our mediocrity and intensely focus, focus, and refocus. No one else is going to focus for us. If we're not part of the solution, we're part of the problem. If others are not willing to understand the great necessity of purely concentrating their energy on the aim of life, if they are not willing to recognize and follow the examples seen in the lives of those who do so, then what can be done? That is their problem. They will have to eventually muster up enough sincerity to realistically deal with it.

It's not enough that we, as spiritual probationers, turn a blind eye toward our various individual and collective ungodly misconceptions, attachments, and lapses along the devotional path. Such apathy, though apparently convenient or accommodating in some ways, never really facilitates an enhanced internal devotional culture. Unless we are willing to admit that we have a disease, and are able to properly diagnose the degree of its infection, we could hardly hope to ascertain or apply the precise scientific therapy required for its proper treatment. In other words, unless we're willing to admit that there are problems, something we can do only if we allow ourselves to notice them, we could hardly expect any viable solution to come to light. Recognizing and frankly voicing that there are problems (calling a spade a spade) does not necessarily constitute an unduly judgmental, antagonistic "faultfinding" tone or tendency.

Moreover, such may provide the impetus to our seriously adopting the means by which the problems can actually be solved. For instance, a doctor may "hate" the disease without at all hating the patient. "Hating" the disease essentially recognizes and, in effect, alludes to the existence of a natural healthy or liberated state. No doubt, "problems" refers to two categorical effects, namely the observable "disobliging" phenomena before us and, far more notably, the cynical mind-set with which we see the phenomena, the cataracts on our own eyes, or in other words, our own lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. No conditioned infinitesimal *jīva* can offer any viable solution to any of life's maladies. Only Kṛṣṇa can alleviate the living entity's problematic state of conditional consciousness, the root cause of all egocentricity, when the latter is somehow induced by Divine Grace to take shelter of His merciful instructions.

The idea of always seeing the "good" in something or someone doesn't necessarily have to mean seeing the relative good as opposed to seeing the relative bad. The principle can and in certain respects must take on higher-dimensional features. When we happen to see adversities, discrepancies, or non-devotional elements, which are conventionally considered to be "bad," we should always endeavor to see good in the bad by bearing in mind the "unseen" all-good hand of Kṛṣṇa. Any agent that in any way reminds us of Kṛṣṇa, prompts us to take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, catalyzes our deeper sense of devotional responsibility, or teaches us important and valuable lessons concerning the culture of self-effacement in full surrender to the will of Kṛṣṇa should be seen as a manifestation of the all-merciful *guru* principle. Śrī Guru is never bad. An elevated devotee always gratefully acknowledges the presence of Śrī Guru and Kṛṣṇa in everything. At least for us, the all-goodness of the *guru* principle seen in our own mistakes as well as in the faults of others may well mercifully teach us how not to be, how not to behave, and the like. Seeing in this way,

we, feeling ourselves blessed by the grace of Śrī Guru, should profusely praise all such indirect manifestations of *guru-tattva* as our ever well-wishers, in spite of their negative exterior. The environment is ever propitious even if fraught with apparent adversity or hostility. Yet, we would certainly have to notice and rightly respond to the blatantly abounding environmental improprieties to realize the beauty in Kṛṣṇa's having placed the nonsense before the purview of our eyes. Right response does not necessitate retaliation against the environment. Adversity and various observable transgressions and imperfections, in fact, afford us an excellent opportunity to exercise our culture of *sādhu-bhūṣaṇa* – tolerance, mercy, friendliness toward all living entities, humility, forgiveness, patience, determination, and the rest. We should understand that the sight of others' misdemeanors and various other calamities are shown to us by Kṛṣṇa for the purpose of dynamically educing our own pure devotional qualities, to enhance our devotional *adhikāra*. The degree to which we are able to perfect this understanding is the degree to which we are actually *sādhus* and *sādhvīs*. To the extent that we are able to recognize this all-good background purpose behind all events of the world, to that extent we are seeing things in proper perspective, and to that extent we may be endowed with first-class Kṛṣṇa consciousness and remain undisturbed in all circumstances, recognizing Kṛṣṇa as the cause of all causes, the ultimate doer.

Relative environmental negativities simply serve to indirectly indicate, laud, and help us appreciate the all-beauteous positivity of the Absolute. The all-merciful hand of God is always behind every major and minor happening of the world. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa gives trouble to the youthful *gopīs* by pinching them or harassing them along the way, toppling their head- or hip-held pots of milk, yogurt, and ghee. At other times He sends them *guñja-mālās* or love messages tremulously inscribed with the juice of red roses by His own hand. Whatever He does, He simply wants to increase

their affection for Him, to somehow draw their attention toward Him. Similarly, all tribulation as well as all jubilation experienced in the course of life's sojourn is but Kṛṣṇa's attempt to get our attention, to elicit our reciprocation in various ways. In His childhood, Kṛṣṇa would often break the motherly *gopīs*' carefully kept pots of yogurt, butter, and ghee, pinch their babies to make them cry, or mischievously urinate on their freshly cleansed floors before escaping; and the *gopīs*, though not catching Him in the act, would easily surmise that it was all His handiwork. Yet, when they, perturbed and frustrated, would gang up on Mother Yaśodā to angrily lodge complaints against Him, they would become charmed and pleased to see Him hiding behind His mother's dress, pretending to be innocent, His face looking so sweet and adorable. At that time their hearts would melt and they would immediately become overwhelmed with motherly affection, dispossessed of their affected anger and annoyance toward Him and happy to have a good excuse to come to His home to see Him in such a state.

A contemporary example: A prankish young school-boy, sitting behind a sweet young girl in his class, secretly dips the ends of her braids in the ink-pot on his desk. Unknown to the girl, the backside of her nice new dress becomes totally blotched with ink and spoiled when she stands up to go home. Only at home, when she changes dress, does she come to know, and she at once ascertains the culprit and complains about him to her mother. The next day, following her mother's advice, she sits across the classroom from him in order to escape his further mischief. But do you think that stops him? Hell no! Desiring her crooked glance, he hurls spitballs across the classroom, bouncing them off the back of her head. At first she pretends not to notice. But after two or three incidents, she becomes annoyed and turns to see from whence the spit-balls came. And who does she see – the prankish boy, hiding his smile while pretending to know nothing of it. At this point she begins to gather that

he must have an interest in her, and she becomes inwardly enchanted and pleased at heart. At recess, when all the boys are playing ball, she, standing on the side, searches and searches among them to find him out in order to witness her prankster's sportsmanship, but she doesn't see him anywhere. Does that mean he's not around? Hell no! Deftly sneaking up from behind, our prankish boy quietly catches a single strand of loose hair from the base of her braid and . . . ping! . . . "Oww! That hurt!" as she whirls around and spontaneously slaps his face screaming, "Oh, you nonsense!" Sprightly sprinting away, feeling very satisfied with himself, and considering all his endeavors a success, having caught her notice and achieved her reciprocation, he elatedly muses again and again, "She loves me! She touched me! She actually touched me!" Later, he sends her a box of sweets; still later, he personally hands her a beautiful bouquet of fantastically fragrant flowers . . . and the rest is history. Whether the boy pesters her in this way or that, or gives her a flower or blows her a kiss, in any case, his intention is to somehow get her attention and occupy her thoughts.

In the same way, Kṛṣṇa just wants to have a relationship with us. So He disturbs us in this way or that, or from time to time sends us some special *mahā-prasādam* or a nice garland of lotus flowers just to in some way or other remind us that He still exists, waiting patiently behind the whole cosmic affair. He has His hand everywhere, and behind that hand is the rest of His person, who is so sweet and adorable and enchanting and full of *rasa*. So though we may feel mistreated in some way or disturbed or dismayed by various situations, when we see within our heart of hearts the all-attractiveness of His beautiful face, we will no longer feel inclined to bear any grudges. Why? Because we know He always has our best interest at heart and that, ultimately, He loves us, even if by His prankish behavior He makes us shed a stream of tears for the rest of eternity.

Another fitting illustration is seen in the contrast between the mentality of a dog and that of a lion. If one throws a dog a bone, the dog will always run after the bone. If one throws a bone to a lion, however, the lion, lifting his head and licking his lips, will turn to check out who it was that threw the bone, considering the thrower to be a tastier prospect, a tastier entity than the thrown! It is better to have the consciousness of a lion than to have the consciousness of a dog. In other words, instead of becoming primarily concerned with or entangled by the external phenomenon itself, it is better to pursue the tastier entity, the higher taste, by looking to see who has placed the external phenomenon before us. And who will we see? We will see that supremely prankish cowherd boy, Vrajendranandana Śyāma, who, by His inscrutable desire, has expanded innumerable cosmic arenas in which He may directly and indirectly enact His various sportive *līlās*. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The world-view of the *uttama-adhikārī mahā-bhāgavata* is achieved by conscientious cultivation of the same, by practicing to perceive the underlying absolute reality behind the illusory relative manifestations. The means and the end are identical. When one becomes habituated to that practice, then such habit becomes second nature. Only on the *uttama-adhikārī* platform of advanced internal absorption in Kṛṣṇa consciousness does one perfectly envisage the world in proper perspective, in terms of the highest understanding. The ultimate understanding is that everything is under Kṛṣṇa's control, and that because Kṛṣṇa is the supremely lovable absolute well-wisher of all living entities and because He is all good, His control always has its all-good, ultimately beneficial objective and outcome. The *uttama-vaiṣṇava* always sees the ultimate-good cause behind all the manifested events of this world. He never loses sight of that vision by adopting an illusory or semi-illusory mode of understanding, even when "coming down" to the position of an institutional

ācārya for preaching. The *kaniṣṭha-bhakta's* angle of vision, though approaching the threshold of spirituality, is still rather mundane or erroneous on account of extensive egocentricity. The *madhyama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava's perception, though considerably advanced toward the spiritual platform by way of determined *śaraṇāgati*, has yet to transcend all tinges of mundanity. Hence it is semi-illusory and thus only partially valid. However, the perfectly liberated non-illusory acuity of reality, which is the absolute transcendental visionary platform, is the prerogative of the *uttama-adhikārī* alone and no one else. Attaining the perfection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness most certainly demands one's evolvement to no less than the *uttama-vaiṣṇava* platform of perception. Anything short of that would be considered unnatural or artificial. It is highly unlikely that a *sādhaka* will advance to the *uttama-adhikārī* platform without an attentive endeavor to purposefully culture the internal and external consciousness of an *uttama-adhikārī*. The culture of internal consciousness means to be absorbed in the pursuit of one's aspired-to position in the *nitya-līlas* of the Lord by cultivating the appropriate *aprākṛta-bhāva*, and the culture of external consciousness means to pursue the *rasika* perception of the phenomenal world as per the principles presently under discussion. A case in perfection is the instance of Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja being harassed by boys jestingly throwing stones at him as he was riding down the road on a bullock cart. Turning to them, he spontaneously chastised, "I know who You are [Kṛṣṇa], and if You don't stop teasing me, I'm going to tell Mother Yaśodā about Your nonsense misbehavior!"

He Rādhe-Śyāma! In the last, anything seemingly unjust, unreasonable, or wrong from the relative standpoint may well directly or indirectly serve as a venerable eye-opener, constituting a formative impetus to one's pitiably crying out for Your special causeless mercy in complete self-surrender. Such could not but

be seen as integral to Your absolute, perfectly synthesized, all-good, complete whole arrangement for the ultimate deliverance of even such as Your single, most insignificant, all but forsaken, inconspicuous, long-lost aspiring maidservant. For me, any other outlook would be illusory. I gratefully offer You my humble obeisances again and again.

It is certainly a fact that all events of the past, present, and future on the relative material time continuum transpire on account of the all-perfect sanction of the absolute, ever-present Supreme Will. Further, it should be well ascertained that in all circumstances every living entity involved is in some way or other effectively moved toward the ultimate surrender of the soul, or at least indirectly engaged by superior arrangement to instrumentally catalyze such surrender in someone. Undoubtedly, everything is perfectly arranged by providence to interactively elicit whatever various responses are circumstantially required to progressively effect every interrelated individual's ultimate reform. For instance, when cows and other animals (or people) are mercilessly slaughtered (physically or psychologically), perceptive individuals will at least wince upon sympathetically imagining the victims' painful plight. The more insightful will cry or at least shudder when considering the butcher's hellish future. Such observable Kali-yuga phenomena may actually serve to awaken or augment, to some extent, a pious soul's natural, inborn quality of compassion. If that much is accomplished, then it may certainly be concluded that Māyā's distressful manifestations have successfully promoted a gradual progress to someone's ultimate good. Persons with *śāstric* vision will soberly understand that both the tortured animals (or people) and the consequently tortured slaughterers are progressively reaping their karmic destinies under the influence of the three material qualities. Both the tortured and the torturer will in due course realize the sufferings of material existence and eventually turn inward toward Godhead. They will thus progressively attain complete perfection at

some future point in time. No conditioned soul is totally isolated. All living relativities in this world are always, knowingly or unknowingly, directly or indirectly, positively or negatively, at least remotely in some way or other interactively instrumental in fulfilling the reformatory purposes of the cosmic manifestation. The apparently endless sojourn of the *jīvātma* through the relative time warp of this ephemeral cosmic dimension will anyway be experienced as a mere dreamlike flash in eternity when one has, at long last, accessed the real-time eternal realm of the Absolute. At that point, the cumulative sufferings that were subconsciously retained from experiences over innumerable lifetimes will, no doubt, positively serve to dynamically enhance the wakened soul's appreciation of the bliss of ultimate enlightenment. Therefore, the wise with the vision of eternity lament neither for the living nor for the dead.

Yet, powerful Kṛṣṇa conscious preachers remain ever perturbed to see "sanctioned" ignorance or forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa, which constitutes the very basis of all "sanctioned" sufferings of the conditioned living entities. They thereby feel themselves to be circumstantially compelled or "sanctioned" to show mercy by helping to elevate the fallen to Kṛṣṇa consciousness whenever plausible ("sanctioned"), to expedite everyone's progress to final beatitude. Was the Mogul Emperor Aurangzeb's desecration of numerous Viṣṇu temples not "sanctioned"? Was his breaking to pieces hundreds of deities not "sanctioned"? Was his paving the walkways up to the Islamic mosques with the pieces of the broken deities not "sanctioned"? Was his terrorizing innumerable *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas not "sanctioned"? Was the envious Kazi's order to cane Haridāsa Ṭhākura in twenty-two market places not "sanctioned"? Would any soft-hearted Vaiṣṇava condone, appreciate, or laud these God-"sanctioned" atrocities? The offended advance by their "sanctioned" praying or crying out to Kṛṣṇa, their exercised tolerance, and their mercifully

applied forgiveness. The sympathetic onlookers, deploring and remonstrating against the demonic mentality of the atheist, advance by their "sanctioned" sorrowful lacrimation and their "sanctioned" endeavors to either practically protect or at least verbally or mentally honor and support the Lord and His devotees. And the offenders advance by inevitably meeting their "sanctioned" total destruction, reducing their "sanctioned" false pride to "sanctioned" ashes! If fortune favors them, they may then hope to enjoy a "sanctioned" humbled fresh start.

In Kali-yuga, we may consider ourselves theistically enriched to the extent that we actually help to promote the cause of congregational *kīrtana* of Kṛṣṇa's Holy Name. Indeed, the degree of support we offer to the propagation of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is irrefutably the sole measure of our unflinching trust in the Personality of Godhead and His precepts descending via the *ācārya-paramparā*. Conversely, we may be considered as atheistical to the extent that we, perfidiously thinking that all wants cannot be fulfilled by congregational chanting and dancing, minimize or obstruct in various ways the propagation of *śuddha-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. We would do well to remember that in this age both the godly and the demonic dwell in the same body, the extent of the latter proportionate to the measure of *anarthas* yet to be eradicated. The trend toward one or the other temperament ultimately reflects an individual's purity of purpose. Was the litigious disunity within Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's Gauḍīya Maṭha, whereby his illustrious preaching mission became markedly dysfunctional, not "sanctioned"? Would not the ability or inability to learn important and perhaps rather costly lessons from all such reprehensible ungodly stagecraft be absolutely "sanctioned" in view of some far-reaching ultimate design or purpose? Would history's horrific recurrence be anything but utterly "sanctioned"? Would not our continued ignorance of the consequences of our own unthinkable self-aggrandizing affronts to the dignity and

integrity of our *ācārya's* mission be well "sanctioned"? How long will we, claiming to be Vaiṣṇavas, opt to slight, disrespect, belittle, or mistreat others out of a risky, false, condescending sense of ascendancy? If we won't learn anything from the "sanctioned" instant or eventual outcome of our own "sanctioned" blatantly whitewashed folly, perhaps at least someone will somewhere along the line. That alone would make the whole "sanctioned" charade worth a little something.

In the final analysis, it may be admitted that any pervertedly reflected illusory manifestation within this cosmos may purposefully pose to prospectively either entangle, liberate, or transcendentally enrapture one, consonant with the degree of spiritual eligibility governing the way one sees and responds to Māyā's multi-functional demeanor. For example, with all due respect to Māyā Devī's empowered most-recognizable expansion in the shape of a psychophysical woman, a so-called man, bewildered by material absorption, misidentifying himself as *puruṣa* or enjoyer and succumbing to an entangling labyrinth of lusty obsessions, foolishly identifies the womanly form as a most desirable and inspirational object of gross or subtle selfish sense delectation. To a lusty man the world appears as if filled with lusty women. He thus, by harboring intensified attachments to vain, romanticized mundane objectives, degrades himself, running the risk of rebirth into an illusory prison-suit body bearing the shapeliness of a *māyic* psychophysical woman. Thus the materially conceived "he" ironically gets "himself" reborn as a materially conceived "she." Such is Māyā's joke!

The somewhat knowledgeable, however, who has become wary of Māyā's allurements, will wisely see the same womanly form as "mother," an expansion of the supreme form of material motherhood, goddess Durgā. In this material world, "mother" means one who gives corporeal birth, and for one who is born, death is certain. So, she who will give birth and concomitant death within this material world shall be deftly esteemed by a vigilant

aspiring transcendentalist as "mother," the personification of repeated birth and death. Steering clear by cautiously maintaining a respectful distance, the aspirant will traverse the path of liberation, intelligently circumventing the shackles of sex attraction, the binding force of this material world.

Yet, an elevated Vaiṣṇava acquainted with higher truths concerning the spiritually substantial reality of which this material world is merely a shadow will ably see everything in a different light. He transcends the relatively mundane principles of both *pravṛtti* (inclination) and *nivṛtti* (disinclination) that refer to material connections. Clearly, he realizes that the temporary, shadowy manifestations of this world, stemming originally from the substantial spiritual names, forms, qualities, and activities of the eternal realm of Goloka, can absolutely serve in various ways to remind a pure devotee of the supreme eternal reality of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. He will therefore allow the sight of the illusory womanly form within this world, which faintly resembles the radiance of spiritual muliebrity, to prompt within himself an internal recollection of the supreme root of all minor expanded varieties of femininity. This original feature of all transcendental womanhood is none other than Śrī Rādhā, who mothers not the material existence of repeated birth and death but rather spiritual birth into eternal loving devotion.

A subordinate king's attitude toward the emperor's envoy conspicuously reflects his general attitude toward the emperor. As a well-wishing emissary coming on behalf of the emperor's government to examine the condition of a subordinate is to be properly honored, so similarly any expanded form of femininity should be honored as a representative of Rādhā. This entire material world, Devī Dhāma, is comprised of *prakṛti*, the expanded feminine energy of Rādhā. Such energy in any form is meant primarily to remind one of Rādhā and is ultimately meant to be engaged so as to serve Her purposes in the matter of assisting to satisfy Her beloved Śyāma. Herein lies the essence of the *yukta-vairāgya* principle.

A thoughtful Vaiṣṇava, therefore, will recognize in any manifested feminine figure the symbolic ambassadress – or messenger maidservant – of Śrī Rādhā, the supreme empress of irresistible supra-mundane feminine attraction for the enchantment of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Externally maintaining a respectful distance from Rādhā's messenger (*dūtī*) so as not to commit offense, while humbly considering himself to be unqualified to directly associate with her as long as he remains in the *sādhaka-deha*, he will simply pray from within that she mercifully inform her *svāminī* (Rādhā) about his pure devotional intents. Internally offering eternal allegiance to Rādhā's lotus feet, he will beg to remain ever supportive and covetous of Her loving service. Then Māyā Devī, being very much satisfied, will mercifully serve in Her primary feature as Yoga Māyā to transcendentally connect the devotee to the *līlās* of the Lord. Such externally prompted reflective remembrance of Śrī Rādhā and Her *gopī* friends and maidservants thus elevates the devotee far beyond the mundane influences of the physical field, unlocking a treasure chest of blissful internal absorption in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Similarly, the tertiary purpose of all varieties of mundane political wrangling within or without the confines of any religious institution would be to endlessly embroil and entangle those who are externally oriented. The secondary purpose of the trite, gracelessly perpetrated power-politics, diplomacy, espionage, sabotage, back-stabbing, subterfuge, intrigue, and managerial baboonery abounding among the neophytes would naturally serve to dismay or disgust the disinterested intermediate devotees. These apolitical *madhyama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇavas scrupulously avoid all such social vulgarities, valuing each fleeting moment as if it were their last. Dissociating themselves as far as possible from the *prākṛta-bhaktas*, they concertedly focus on their devotional services of hearing and chanting, etc. and remain relatively freed from the time and energy squandering perplexities of institutional strife.

No doubt the actual primary purpose of everything within this cosmos, including all the petty little interpersonal, interdepartmental, interinstitutional, international, and interplanetary conflicts inevitable at practically every Kali-yuga turn in life, is to one way or another remind the progressive *antaraṅga-bhaktas* of Kṛṣṇa and His various pastimes. Political intrigue in its original supramundane feature certainly exists in the highest spiritual realm, Goloka Vṛndāvana. As in this world, only in a pure way, it dramatically serves to thicken the plot! So, when circumstantially noticing the bogus claptrap, caballing, and sheer tomfoolery of this plane, the resolute pure-hearted *sādhakas* and *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas may solace themselves to some extent by reflectively remembering the likes of *dāna-keli-* or *muktā-carita-kathāmṛta* by recalling the alarming antics of Jaṭilā and Kuṭilā or by musing upon the original, absolute, contentious rivalry between the followers of Rādhārāṇī and the followers of Candrāvalī. As they turn disadvantage into advantage, seeing substance within shadow, they are transported to the plane of transcendental bliss. Thus, they remain self-satisfied in all circumstances. Let the calamities come again and again – and again and again and again – *te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā bhajante māṁ dṛḍha-vratāḥ!*

Still, my heartfelt feelings are that we could hardly expect to legislate or despotically enforce real love and trust by callously compelling the stringent orthodox letter of the law, let alone wrongheaded, illiteral, or fictive fanatical contortions thereof. It just ain't polite. Rather, I would prefer to suggest that by constant unbiased recourse to the law's dynamics, essential purpose, or inner spirit, in a facilitative temper we might hope to more or less naturally secure the desirable fruit in proportion to the purity of our perception of cogitable reality, as relevant to individual time, space, heart, and circumstance. That one would barbarously blunder to grandiloquently exhibit, time and again ad nauseam, one's unseemly, spiritually perverted *īśvara-bhāva* or inordinate appetite for peremptorily governing everyone and everything

(well . . . everything except, of course, one's own materially anchored domineering manner of manipulatively controlling and controlling everyone and everything and everything else) hardly says much for one's measure of devotional sobriety, theocratic fitness, or accomplishment in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Leadership or managerial positions dare not be exploited as incumbencies from which to intimidate or brutishly lord it over the Lord's devotees on the pretext of "getting the job done." The pure devotional service attitude and that which is vitiated by the hostile, egoistically grounded lording propensity smack not of the same tenor. *Guru* is commander-in-chief – not demander-in-chief. *Guru-paramparā* is chain of command – not chain of demand. *Guru* and subsequent representatives are not to demand services on behalf of the Lord. Rather, on the basis of visibly ideal character, they are to command or elicit such by openly demonstrating the unalloyed selfless service attitude toward the Lord and the world about. It is not the institution that makes the man; it is the man that makes the institution.

To be real, earnestly shared sincerity of approach, regardless of expressional form, is at the very wellspring of trustworthiness, far above and beyond the indecorous, stereotypical tactlessness of frequently resorted to blunt, oft-times duplicitous managerial expediencies. Not all knavish administrative prevarication or diplomatic cajolery constitutes pious fraud. Moreover, love in the real sense, though certainly subsuming the substantive principle of service to actual eternal self-interest, in fact never seeks to interfere with, subvert, or squelch the individual's freely volitional application of personal integrity in deciding one's own suitable mode of devotional reciprocation. Hence, mature mutual give-and-take on the spiritual platform had better soberly respect a broader-mindedness, accommodating the significance of unique individual perspective or taste, perhaps even considerably beyond one's own prejudice or preset dogmatic viewpoint – so help us God!

He Rādhe-Śyāma! The pursuit of lofty mundane academic degrees very rarely if ever really lends itself to an expedited pure devotional progress. Rather, it tends to render one more ass-like in that one often trends to unduly bear, even long after initiation into the *bhakti* cult, a cumbrous, almost unshakable, inflated sense of self-importance. Furthermore, one may unfortunately entertain an immodest impression of one's "superiority" over others who are less materially qualified, thus gobbling up heaps and piles of temporary hog-stool-like false prestige on the basis of accumulated collegial *upādhis*. One must sagaciously avoid the snobbish, over-intelligent, grossly idiotic notion that such slaughterhouse academia is in any way a prerequisite for high-grade devotional eligibility, competency, or potential, or to any degree indicative of such. When has such a conceited, specious idea ever been taught by an *ācārya* or upheld by *śāstra*?

How highly educated was Vālmīki? Were Hanumān, Sugrīva, Jāmbavan, or Jaṭāyu college graduates? How doctorately decorated were Mṛgāri, the hunter; Dhruva; Prahlāda; or even their *guru*, Nārada, in his previous life as the son of a maidservant? How sophisticated or cultured was the prostitute who, by the grace of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, converted to Vaiṣṇavism and chanted no less than three lakhs of *hari-nāma* daily? What about Haridāsa Ṭhākura himself? How literate was the celebrated South Indian *brāhmaṇa* whom Lord Gaurāṅga embraced, eulogizing him as having truly understood the essence of the *Gītā*? How boastfully bookish was Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Babajī Mahārāja? How many pointed examples are required to illustrate the principle? Besides, we should simply ask – Is the world over not teeming with college graduates and professionals who profess avowed atheism or agnosticism?

One may argue that collegians have a better chance of viewing the gamut of worldly affairs, thereby increasing their natural drift toward a spirit of renunciation, but I dare challenge this idea.

Realistically, how many graduates conclude from all their studies that they should just abandon the path of material amelioration to join the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement? Out of many thousands of such supposedly educated people, hardly one has any idea of spiritual perfection, what to speak of endeavoring for it. And of the relatively few who do gain some understanding of or interest in *sampradāyic* devotion, what percentage of those practicing the process on any level opts for a life of practical, devotion-based renunciation stemming from genuine material exhaustion?

Sophistical, materially conceived strategic religio-administrative contrivances may appear to bluster their professed expediency in determining the devotional eligibility of a candidate, albeit, only as long as a dearth of genuinely mature spiritual insight debilitates one's power to perceive otherwise obvious degrees of *śaraṇāgati* or spiritual surrender, indicative of an individual's actual level of pure devotional *śraddhā*. My observation is that elevated *pāramārthika-śraddhā* manifests on the strength of the gradual accumulation of stockpiles of *bhakty-unmukhī sukṛti*, or piety associated with and giving rise to *śuddha-bhakti*. Such accrues on account of service-related involvement with agents of pure devotion in this and previous existences. This alone is the true measure of anyone's fitness to pursue the path of *bhakti* at the spiritual master's *āśrama*. Such pure devotional *śraddhā* and subsequent spiritual evolvement may be had by anyone – regardless of materially pious or impious background in terms of species, race, caste, creed, academic qualification, or pecuniary status – via the potent influence of authentically empowered, munificent representatives of Divine Grace. There is no use in eristically contending this point, drawing on any amount of sciolistic rhetoric. All things of this cosmos, though real in the sense that they consist of the energies of the Absolute Reality, in fact appear as valueless as so many zeroes by time's dynamics, which reduce everything to oblivion. Zeroes alone are valueless.

Only when the "One" of Kṛṣṇa consciousness stands before the "zeroes" of this world do the zeroes gain spiritual value, proportionate to the degree that they actually contribute to the favorable cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Still, in truth, it is the "One" of pure, forceful Kṛṣṇa consciousness, with or without any subsequent number of "zeroes," that is ultimately noteworthy, important, precious, and efficacious.

Magnanimous first-class preachers, in the course of spreading the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, may go all out in various ways to extend Lord Gaurāṅga's *saṅkīrtana* movement even to persons puffed-up or smug with aristocracy, mundane scholarship, and material affluence. They tenderheartedly consider those so materially obsessed to be the most terribly entrenched victims of Kali's influences, the least likely to otherwise recognize and feelingly honor the mercy of the Holy Name. The complete conversion of such spiritually debased, vainglorious Kali-yuga reprobates to Vaiṣṇavism would serve primarily to proclaim a most prodigious spiritual triumph, further acclaiming the glorious beatitude of *bhakti's* benignity. Such conversion is not at all intended to "up-grade" the material status quo, prestige, or popularity of any missionary institution. To grant or deny facilities for advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness merely on the consideration of material qualification certainly constitutes an outrageous spiritual iniquity. Real knowledge is engendered by and subservient to *bhakti* and is always evinced by genuine pure devotional humility. If it is observed that a "scholarly" individual has virtuously embraced standard pure devotional ethics, we should clearly conclude such to be attributable not to the individual's mundane erudition or cerebral dexterity, whatever the level, but, undeniably, to the mercy of pure-hearted *sādhus*.

Unvitiated, truly elevated, scientifically conversant devotees of the Lord easily see through the fraudulent front of feigned self-effacement so often accompanying the copiously concocted

"foolosophical" distortions of Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*, *rasa-vicāra*, and so on rampant in the rather absurd dissertations of overweening, surprisingly well-placed, somewhat lavishly lettered opportunistic institutional evangelists. Guileless pure devotees decline to recognize or support such gratuitous, bombastic, quasi-theosophical craftsmanship masqueraded as abstruse Kṛṣṇa conscious esotericism. Hence, anything more than a semblance of *bhakti* most certainly eludes such show-bottle expositors of so-called transcendental knowledge, despite their sacerdotal echelon or externally impressive scholastic pre-eminence. Realization of the science of pure devotion is a matter of revelation from within the heart based on an individual's degree of surrender to Kṛṣṇa, not degrees of irrelevant mundane academic so-called qualifications. Bhakti, independent as she is, always causelessly appears to gradually influence the heart of anyone of her own choosing and accord. Flagrantly propagated or slyly insinuated, deviously hatched fallacies or misconceptions concerning the autonomous nature of Bhakti's benevolence would certainly be seen as symptomatic of this present age of nescience, altercation, hoax, and hypocrisy.

My dear Prāṇeśvārī, Śrīmatī Rādhāsundarī! Do You remember the instance of Your extreme compassion upon that useless little flower? I become immensely solaced and hopeful thinking of Your special mercy upon her. During Your *vana-vihāra-līlā*, one evening in the month of Jyeṣṭha, as You and Your Beloved were strolling along the forest path with Your *sakhīs*, playful Śyāma, to give happiness to the trees and creepers, was admiring them by touching their fruits and leaves and smelling their fragrant flowers. As the two of You gradually approached a thicket along the way, one unassuming, useless little flower began to anxiously cry in great anxiety, lamenting, "Oh, why did I have to be a useless flower? Why? Why did I have to be so useless? Why did I have to be without any fragrance for the pleasure of His senses?

Oh! He never accepts us useless flowers. I am the embodiment of the offense of offering useless flowers! I'm so unfortunate! What is the use of having taken such a useless birth in this land of Vraja? Why did I have to be so useless?" Crying and crying again and again, she deeply despaired: "Anyway, there is no hope of ever being enjoyed by Him in this birth. I will give up my life by being trampled under His lotus feet!" With this determination, she, weeping and weeping, forcibly threw herself down off the bush, falling unconscious on the forest path. O dear Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! You, overhearing the distress of her heart, pointed her out to Your loving Śyāma, who, mercifully reaching down and picking her up from the ground, happily placed her as a beautiful flower ornament atop His crown, giving her limitless beaming bliss and glorifying the intensity of her *bhāva* above the sentiments of all other flowers!

He Rādhe-Śyāma! Offering unto You my one and only scentless soul is no better than the offense of offering a useless flower. This *līlā*, however, demonstrates to me that the little flower's external deficiency really had no direct bearing on the actual status of her internal loving sentiments, but rather indirectly served to enhance them. *He* Rādhe-Śyāma! Please in the same way, despite everything, see something good in my lowly self; pick me up and save me from the perilous forest path of my own unbounded uselessness.

Many devoted souls were placed in lower-class, materially degraded or uneducated, less sophisticated families by the will of the Supreme Authority, just to give them a better chance to more feelingly approach Your Lordship's lotus feet with the requisite humility and natural modesty which was most lucklessly lacking in their previous life of liberal loftiness. Moreover, it is clearly explained in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature that great devotees of Lord Gaurāṅga purposely appeared in such degraded families or in impious lands specifically to demonstrate that the evolvement of *bhakti* is in no way dependent upon material conditions.

Everything considered, it should be well understood that the culmination and conclusion of all learning and education is the congregational chanting of the Holy Name.

I don't think every college graduate is an ass. Some of my best friends are college graduates. As for myself, I graduated from the ISKCON School of Hard Knocks where I am presently doing my postgraduate studies. Hare Kṛṣṇa!

He Rādhe-Śyāma! Let those callous to the call for discipular self-improvement complacently attach themselves to retarded, self-centered, substandard, third-class sentimental modes of spiritual progress; we can be persuaded to spiritually advance only if we possess at least a preliminary aspiration for self-realization.

He Rādhe-Śyāma! Let the holier-than-thou budding religio-institutional corporate bureaucrats, endlessly clinging to their conspicuously crude, consistently illiberal *kaniṣṭha* disposition, sanctimoniously integrate their as-yet-unsubdued, ignoble fault-finding proclivities on the plea of loyal managerial vigilance. Shall not we overlook their own fault of resolute self-aggrandizing censoriousness, as do they? Shall not we stoop so low as to criticize the criticizers who opportunistically magnify the foibles of others? Shall we at all dare to see any fault in faulting the faultfinding of the faultfinders?

Are the pots not calling the kettles black? *Ātma-van manyate jagat* – a thief thinks everyone to be desirous of stealing his ill-gotten gains; a cheat sees the world to be full of cheaters. Kṛṣṇa often allows us to see others' faults just to remind us of the need to fine-tune our own approach to devotional life. We would always do well to remember in this connection that when we point our finger at the faults of others, three fingers conversely indicate our own. This incontrovertibly implies that even (if not especially) religiously ordained administrators who see fit to occasionally employ corrective measures with a view to bring about an individual's or a faction's Kṛṣṇa-conscious cultural conformity

should crucially consider it to be thrice their responsibility to address their own shortcomings, their own misconceptions, and their own reform, rather than to be obsessed with the reformation of anyone else. Any field of management certainly demands the responsible assessment of the individuals involved – seeing any situation, individual, or faction with one bad eye and one good eye. Care ought to be exercised, however, so as to avoid any offense. After all, bee-like devotees always delight in finding honey-like good qualities with a view to bring out the best in others.

Let the pugnacious, double-dealing congenital equivocators openly paying lip service to a dramatically elegant, generously accommodating "Kṛṣṇa conscious" paradigm, underhandedly machinate and militate against any other than their own doctrinaire politically correct prejudications. We shall no longer waste our days and nights dwelling on the wonderful workings of the three modes of material nature. There is much more important business at hand.

Dear Śrī Śrī Rādhe-Śyāma! Let the inadequately edified thousands of those doggedly attached to their mere eligibility for the rudimentary practices of *vaidhī sādhana-bhakti* with their underdeveloped third-rate spiritual acumen and their unfortunate want of adequate scriptural penetration pertinaciously err to misrepresent the actual thrust of the Gauḍīya creed in their rather pontifical preachings. Let them attempt in every way to systematically disparage or quell any upsurge of expressed aspirations for *rāga-bhajana*. Looking askance, we shall politely ignore them.

If as a result of limitless transcendental book distribution, even one obscure undeterred soul perfectly ascertains, appreciates, and imbibes the superlative aspect of *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavism, following the immaculate, spontaneous selfless loving service moods (*bhāvollāsa-rati*) of Your most intimate eternal associates in the supremely enchanting land of Vraja, then, my dear Śrī Śrī Rādhe-Śyāma, please let us consider the Hare Krishna movement to be somewhat forward.

My dear most love-worthy and merciful Rādhā-Śyāmasundara! May the broad-minded, forward-thinking souls evermore respect these deliberations, which are replete with profound concerns for advancing a more progressive culture of *antaraṅga-bhakti* in the lives of Your seriously dedicated *saṅkīrtana* devotees. Please let those essence-seeking, deeply introspective, softhearted individuals who patiently and sincerely read or hear these verbose utterances very soon attain the highest transcendental happiness (*paramānanda*) in the spontaneous loving service of Your lotus feet according to their innermost heart's aspirations.

Second Heartfelt Effusion

Second Heartfelt Effusion

My dear Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara! Crying at the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, one very fallen and destitute soul humbly offers to You the following unrestrained stream of prayerful outpourings for Your kind and considerate audience.

Some brazenly declare that the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is dead – a lifeless corpse spasmodically flapping for a few residual moments before total collapse. Others rashly conclude that transcendental book distribution is for the neophytes. Still others insist that the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement could never attain *vraja-prema* or *vraja-līlā* due to all the offenses a few of its leading members have done to great souls; they could attain Vaikuṇṭha at best. Even worse, much high-flung absurdity spews forth, inanely declaring the Bhaktivedanta purports to be detrimental to one's faith in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I ask, Are these blessings, promises, challenges, curses, insults, or threats? I dare doubt not only the legitimacy but also the very rectitude of such statements. If there were but one sincere, unsullied soul living among the members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, could we not construe the establishment, notwithstanding all its trials and tribulations, to still be alive in spite of itself? Aside from that, did not great devotees of the Rūpānuga-sampradāya, like Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Prabhupāda, and more recently, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, humbly embrace the task of transcendental book distribution to uplift the fallen? Should we deem them neophytes? Moreover, are we to say that the above-suggested immature, superstitious bigotry of a few adherents becomes automatically imputed to yet the broader-minded more progressive students

simply by dint of institutional membership? Must an entire army stand trial for the interinstitutional war crimes of a handful of its soldiers? Is attainment of the *vraja-līlās* not contingent upon the Lord's response to an individual's sincerity of purpose? Can we not see even one worthy soul among the followers of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda intently pursuing the progressive living spirit of self-discovery culminating in the realization of *vraja-prema*? Is there no one "in" the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement desperately crying out for the mercy of Śrī Lalitā, Rūpa, and their attendants? Can their decision to bestow or not bestow special causeless mercy upon anyone be countermanded merely by the miserly dictums of minute *jīvas* who wish to be distinguished as the foremost *rasa-ācāryas* of all the little *rāgānuga* wannabes? Is there any consideration at all beyond the transcendental preponderance of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's mercy?

O dear queen of my life, most gracious Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! O cherished treasure of my heart, honey-moon-faced Śyāma! Please let us have recourse to higher authorities to whom we may confidently appeal our individual cases! Have we not read many scriptures? Have we not served many *gurus*? Is Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma not the greatest of all *gurus*, the crowning splendor of all the scriptures? Is the dust of Vraja not ultimate authority? Is *hari-dāsa-varya*, Giri Govardhana, not highest authority? May we not earnestly resort to the life-saving waters of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa, optimistically anticipating the fruition of our heart's enshrined aspirations? Is His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Mahārāja Śrīla Prabhupāda himself not, in truth, higher authority? One may, to whip up some sort of esteem in the eyes of a rather credulous following, vaunt otherwise in violation of due Vaiṣṇava decorum, but honestly speaking, one would do very well to remember that ultimately the decision as to who is nearer and dearer to Lord Gaurāṅga is not in our hands. Are Śrī Śrī Jāhnavā-Nitai not our ultimate well-wishers? Does not the very name

"Rādhā," when fervently chanted, forgive all Vaiṣṇava *aparādhas*? Does not even a single recitation of the name "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya" forgive all offenses? Do the statements of the *ācāryas* regarding all these things now betray us?

Hṛdaya Caitanya, considering his disciple Duḥkhī Kṛṣṇadāsa to be a wayward offender, wanted to punish him for changing his *tilaka* and also for changing his name to Śyāmānanda. My dear Śyāmasundara! Did Śyāmānanda not appeal to Lalitā, Rādhā, and subsequently Subala (Gaurī dāsa Paṇḍita, the spiritual master of Hṛdaya Caitanya himself)? Was Śyāmānanda not able to achieve the blessings of Rādhārāṇī by the grace of Jīva Gosvāmī in spite of the displeasure and considerable consternation of his *guru*, Hṛdaya Caitanya?

Anyway, so be it! Even if it were true that the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is dead and so forth, still, I would never give up my deepest gratitude toward His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and his many sincere servitors who, though bearing diverse levels of spiritual qualification and empowerment, benevolently went out of their way to help extend all those life-line literatures to the lives of fallen conditioned souls like me. If the words of our *ācārya* diminish one's faith in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then pray tell how, by reading his Bhaktivedanta purports, thousands of people from all walks of life continue to come forward to join the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and become attached to the pursuit of *kṛṣṇa-prema*?

My dear Śrī Śrī Rādhe-Śyāma! I know I'm not qualified. I know I'm an offender. On that account, I may rightly be ever deprived of the wish-fulfilling service of Your lotus feet in Your most charming land of Vraja. Still, I declare and declare emphatically that I shall never relinquish my enthusiasm for hearing the incomparably brilliant exaltations of Your glorious names, forms, qualities, and pastimes from the pages of all those beautiful books of the followers of Lord Gaurāṅga!

Hā Rādhe-Śyāma! Are You kindhearted or what? If You want to stick me this way and that with all the apparently dogmatic, arbitrary, unintelligible, virtually impracticable rules and regulations of the *smṛti-śāstras*, then surely there is no hope for my redemption.

Yet even if in Your view I should have to be born and reborn in hell for the rest of eternity, I shall never ever give up hoping against hope that one day some unlimitedly compassionate person will take pity on me and, though I be not at all deserving or fit, benignantly fulfill my impossible dream to attain but a dust particle of direct engagement in the service of Your eternal associates.

My dear Rādhe-Śyāma! Even though I am certainly a reprehensible reprobate, devoid of any trace of good qualities and deserving to be punished in every way, please hear the earnest plea of my heart's deepest desperation. Please don't laugh at me, scorn me, or doubt me in any way. Even if I will never be allowed to relish a single drop of the ocean of nectarean mellows of pure unalloyed *prema* for Your lotus feet, please let me perpetually or even just in some lifetime or another live and die in the dust of Vraja-bhūmi, hoping against hope to some day in the course of eternity attain You.

My dear most fortunate and beneficent Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! Please allow me to take my birth millions and billions of times in Vraja-bhūmi in any species of life, even as a worm in the stool of a pig, rather than banishing me to become a queen of Dvārakā or an associate of Lakṣmī in Vaikuṇṭha.

Even if I will not be permitted to eternally reside at Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma, please let my heart live here always.

He Rādhe-Śyāma! Please do not forsake me! Please forgive me for my many obvious faults and shortcomings and somehow or other compassionately find the ways and means to take my withering soul to Your lotus feet. Otherwise, what hope is there for such a helplessly fallen and blameworthy creature as myself?

To hell with trying to secure a comfortable situation within this temporary world of shadowy afflictions!

To hell with hoping for heavenly delights on earth, elevation to *svarga-loka*, or residence on any of the highest planets within this cosmos!

To hell with the achievement of mystic perfections!

To hell with all our exuberant eating, sleeping, mating, and defending on the plea of keeping body and soul together for the performance of sacrifice!

To hell with the attempt to curtail our generally excessive eating, sleeping, mating, and defending, with the aim of practicing the principles of practical renunciation!

To hell with undergoing severe penances and austerities for the sake of self-realization and God consciousness!

To hell with the achievement of the five kinds of liberation!

To hell with the attainment of Vaikuṇṭha-loka in the eternal kingdom of God!

To hell with having been born on Earth as some kind of dull-headed humanoid in this most glorious Age of Kali in which Lord Caitanya has appeared to make self-realization easy by inaugurating the *saṅkīrtana* movement of the Holy Name!

To hell with conceitedly boasting of our descent from a most venerable disciplic succession of eternally perfect Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*!

To hell with exploiting the prestige of sitting at the lotus feet of such a topmost *rasika* Vaiṣṇava as His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, or any other for that matter!

To hell with strictly following the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma*! That is for the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* having meager pure devotional *śraddhā*.

To hell with playing "Mommy" and "Daddy" in the material world!

To hell with our having opened hundreds of temples, restaurants, and farm communities with the aim of delivering all the fallen conditioned souls in the universe from the cycle of repeated birth and death!

To hell with animal husbandry!

To hell with following from A to Z all the damn rules and regulations of the International Society for Rules and Regulations!

To hell with trying to become a Hare Kṛṣṇa clone!

To hell with our having "advanced" through the fires of years upon years of ordeal in the almost intolerable association of blundering neophytes!

To hell with attempting to express our love for *guru* and Kṛṣṇa in terms of endlessly bearing the brunt of relentless institutional strife!

To hell with toeing the party line!

To hell with the institutionalism of the institutionalists!

To hell with religio-institutional corporatocracy!

To hell with trying to reconcile ourselves to the neoteric drift of a movement's henpecked leadership!

To hell with being a Hare Kṛṣṇa yes-man!

To hell with all the superficial role-modeling!

To hell with our profiling as advanced devotees when we know damn well we're not!

To hell with palming off self-affected, spiritually gutless macho Kali-yuga so-called heroism as inspirational devotional dignity! Real heroism aims exclusively to conquer the heart of Kṛṣṇa.

To hell with grappling for socioreligious eminence!

To hell with the institutional rubber-stamping of *sampradāyic* supermen!

To hell with the "necessary evil" of (poorly) organized religion!

To hell with all the meetings, resolutions, revolutions, dissolutions, and no solutions ad-infinitum!

To hell with the ever-abounding, all-entangling crisis (mis) management syndrome! What could be expected of an institution that currently runs rather like a decapitated donkey?

To hell with our having supposedly heard and regurgitated hundreds and thousands of *Bhāgavatam* classes, dutifully attended thousands and millions of *maṅgala-ārātrika* and *guru-pūjā kīrtanas*, and perfunctorily chanted millions and billions of rounds of *mahā-mantra-japa*! Shnick, Shnick, Raam, Raam!

To hell with all our vehemently preaching about preaching about preaching about how we're supposed to preach about preaching about preaching about how we're supposed to preach! What are we "preachers" supposed to be preach-preachidy-preaching about? To what extent have we actually understood?

To hell with the profiteering of the cash-covetous, business-brained mongers of transcendental knowledge!

To hell with the Hindu-bindu Society for Currency (oops! I mean Kṛṣṇa) Consciousness! I say to hell with milking the Hindu cash cow!

To hell with the cost-effective, vogue-wise Hare Kṛṣṇa phobia!

To hell with the painfully put-on *saṅkīrtana* smile!

To hell with it! Like infatuated children, avidly engrossed in the perpetual pastime of competitively collecting rare and unusual coinage, we accumulate the hundreds and thousands of unqualified neophyte disciples under the pretext of perpetuating the *sampradāya*. I say, to hell with it!

To hell with, on the plea of concern for others, becoming so blunderingly bogged down with all the petty little problems of the hundreds and thousands of corporeally attached *śiṣya-prāya* "disciples" that one fails to oneself find the time and space required to complete even the minimum *nāma-bhajana* expected of a new *bhakta*; what then of achieving the advanced internal devotional realizations needed to become, for the benefit of one's disciples, anything better than a half-baked cookie!

To hell with the undignified, artfully employed, hard-nosed, cunningly politic, cold-shouldering, dog-eat-dog bureaucratic ecclesiastico-oligarchic spin control! Has anyone ever achieved *prema* by this approach?

To hell with socioreligious mass consensual trance!

To hell with being a pawn on the religio-managerialist chessboard of any stool-passing mortal!

To hell with coyly compromising the truth to kowtow to the cacophonous misconclusions of dull-headed under-enlightened ecclesiastics of religio-executive clout!

To hell with all the rubbish, time-wasting, power-politicking religio-institutional/interinstitutional hostilities! Are there not yet innumerable grumblers, intent on being inexorably encumbered by such endless, trivial affairs?

To hell with in-house party-spirited pseudo-disciplic partiality.

To hell with the materially concocted hallucination of having so-called friends and enemies among the Vaiṣṇavas!

To hell with the perfidiously inflicted, heartlessly top-heavy centralized manipulation of manpower and money! On the threadbare plea of "spreading love of Godhead," do such scheming preoccupations now indispensably supersede our life's mission of becoming mad after Kṛṣṇa?

To hell with scrambling to savor varieties of mundane *rasa* on the pretext of fostering socially feasible spiritual enrichment!

To hell with the fools who conscientiously avoid hearing, chanting, and remembering the Lord's *rāsa-līlā* and other *mādhurya* pastimes with the *gopīs*. They will never attain perfection. If I chance to encounter the likes of such imposter Vaiṣṇavas, I will close my ears to their philosophical absurdities, refuse to see their faces, and scorn the dismal air about their corpse-like material bodies.

To hell with fashionably passing off sub-religious quasi-Kṛṣṇa-conscious eclecticism as harmonious devotional practice!

To hell with being anyone's giggling *guru*!

To hell with being anyone's giggling disciple!

To hell with the deliberate dumbing down of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement!

To hell with pandering to the psycho-physical indulgences of the movement's lowest common denominator!

To hell with the deaf ears of the conceited, self-complacent, ivory-towered religio-administrative power elites!

To hell with spineless, self-serving ecclesiastico-political correctitude!

To hell with our having distributed billions and trillions of transcendental literatures all over the world in scores of languages to give everyone else a chance to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious!

I say to hell with it all!

Much of the afore-denounced may be wonderful, meritorious or pressingly (depressingly) important on one level or another, but if in the end, after all is said and done, we ourselves, as individuals, could not effectively grasp, take to heart, factually realize, and blissfully relish the deepest essential living import of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta* (learning to love Vrajendra-nandana Śyāma by carefully pursuing the *bhāvas* of the supra-exemplary damsels of Vraja), what would we have really gained from the whole affair? Truly speaking, what would be the sense or significance of any other allegedly laudable undertaking or feat? Are we merely amassing *sukṛti* (or *duṣkṛti*) for another valiant try in some future birth, or what? – an inconversant step in hopefully the right direction? Do we really know what we are doing? Do we want *kṛṣṇa-prema* or not? Kindly do not hastily suspect these questions to be in any way inconsequential. Okay, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a gradual process – as gradual as we make it. It really doesn't have to be that gradual, though. Candidly speaking, charity really begins at home. It's true that the highest realization is to take all risk, to go out of one's way to save the world. That is our mission, for sure. Even so, still higher than that, ultimately, the very highest

realization, the profoundest mission, is to save oneself. First make yourself spiritually fit. Doctor, heal thyself! First chant and dance in ecstasy like a madman, then worry about saving the rest of the world. Higher than becoming *guru* is to become an accomplished, fully self-realized disciple, and that hardly implies that one should pompously pose as a king with no clothes to passionately impress the little neophytes with how much one might have superficially garnered from the lines of letters on the pages of piles of books. A mesmerizing, ostentatious cerebral miscellany indeed! Nowhere is it mentioned in any *śāstra* that neophytes and intermediate devotees achieve *prema* by initiating hundreds and thousands of disciples. It is really best not to accept any disciples at all. Better by far we humbly endeavor to chant *śuddha-nāma* via the intent prosecution of *yuga-dharma nāma-saṅkīrtana* with a view to achieve ultimate *rāga-maya* perfection at the feet of Śrī Guru. Then we may hope to become truly empowered instruments in the hands of the predecessor *ācāryas*.

He Rādhe-Śyāma! Please allow me at this point to elaborate on this proposition for the careful deliberation of the revered readers, to whom I offer my *koṭi koṭi daṇḍavat-praṇāmas*.

We should bear in mind that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in personally demonstrating the exemplary course of pure devotional conduct to edify the people of this dismal domain, adopted two programs of vital concern, which are in fact, to a large extent, intrinsically intersupportive of each other. The three internal purposes of His advent, primarily corresponding to the *tripād-vibhūti-cid-jagat* (internal, spiritual, all-sentient world comprising three fourths the kingdom of God), were essentially a matter of His pursuing the internal *rasika* relishment of pure devotional *bhāvas*. The one external purpose of inaugurating the movement of mass *saṅkīrtana* for the deliverance of materially conditioned *jīvas* should be seen as relevant, or consequential, to His appearance in this *ekapād-vibhūti-acit-jagat* (dull material world covering only

one fourth of God's kingdom). It is a fact that His propagation of the Holy Name enhanced, in certain respects, His direct relishment of Rādhā's intensified happiness in the form of Her overflowing benevolence toward others in view of Kṛṣṇa's expanded bliss. Nevertheless, it should be noted with profit that the internal absorption was primarily effective whereas the external parallel was a subsequent effect rooted in His aspiration to taste the ever-expanding sweetness of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Rādhā is the complete whole personification of Kṛṣṇa's compassionate nature expanded into innumerable personified counterpart aspects of the same intrinsic supra-mundane potency. As the experiential value of ten-million fold must necessarily be established on the basis of the experiential value of one, so without the premise of Rādhā's actual experience of personally meeting with Kṛṣṇa, the assertion of Her ten-million-fold happiness in making arrangements for the other expanded aspects of Herself to meet with Him remains only so much meaningless verbiage. Similarly, it is said that anyone can have the experience of ten-million-fold the happiness of personally meeting and embracing Kṛṣṇa by preaching the *saṅkīrtana* movement to convince other conditioned souls to take steps toward Him. Even so, it would behoove a thoughtful devotee to initially come to the position of personally experiencing Kṛṣṇa, embracing Kṛṣṇa in unalloyed *prema* – face to face, eye to eye, cheek to cheek, hand to hand, chest to chest, etc., etc. Obviously, without gaining the actual direct experience, one could hardly realize in a practical sense whether one would be in fact subjectively sustaining ten-million-fold *ānanda* or not. One might question whether one is being "transcendentally" conned by an inducting missionary hype or what! If most neophyte book distributors and "preachers" were to consider the idea on the basis of the relatively paltry slight rapture they experience on the preaching field, they might conclude that if the experience of meeting Kṛṣṇa would be one ten-millionth of the experience they undergo in

the course of their preaching struggle, meeting Kṛṣṇa could hardly be a very happy affair! So why bother to advance one's *pūrva-rāga*, anxiously hoping against hope to someday actually meet Him face to face and eye to eye? Moreover, if they were factually tasting the ten-million-fold happiness they were purported to be able to taste, then why do so many of them fall away to re-chew the pre-chewed gross and subtle sense gratification for want of achieving a higher taste? We see, but we don't see. If one actually saw Kṛṣṇa, one would faint! If one actually saw Rādhārāṇī, one would die!

One might pause for a moment and question to what extent a practitioner could have actually seen, experienced, tasted, "realized," or even basically understood for that matter who is Kṛṣṇa, what is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For the most part, a *sādhaka* cannot do any more than conjecture or imagine what it means to be fully Kṛṣṇa conscious. It is like a child trying to understand what it's like to be a grown-up. We should doubtlessly acknowledge that the Lord quickly recognizes anyone who teaches the secrets of the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the benefit of the fallen conditioned souls. Still, to be sure, it would not be inappropriate at this point to aver that only a topmost devotee can really preach with the requisite purity, potency, and background of full-fledged *śuddha-sattvika* realization to effectually revolutionize or spiritually enkindle the heart of anyone. Only a *mahā-bhāgavata* invested with the (*hlādinī*) potency to do so is fit to bestow *śuddha-nāma*, which alone can be said to be, in the real sense, identical with *nāmī*, Kṛṣṇa Himself, subsumptive of all His internal spiritual potencies. Others, occupied with missionary movements (antics), may by hook or by crook generate a curiosity, psychologically sway via various inveigling modus operandi, or sympathetically encourage by pointing the way on the basis of slight philosophical grasp; something is better than nothing, for sure. We must certainly recognize as *guru* (on one level or another) and remain ever grateful to anyone "big" or "small" who in any way to any degree helps us take even the smallest steps toward

the service of the Absolute Truth. Nevertheless, we should also respectfully admit that merely going through the motions (Hare Kṛṣṇa movements), as it were, and actually getting the whole job done may prove to be conspicuously dissimilar at the upshot. In other words, the degree of a devotee's genuine experience of Kṛṣṇa's sweetness, as proportionately revealed by Kṛṣṇa Himself in response to one's evolving *premika* sweetheartedness toward Him, assumes the fundamental measure of one's *adhikāra* to perform empowered *saṅkīrtana*.

Those who think themselves to be Vaiṣṇavas, as well as individuals who regard themselves as *guru* of Vaiṣṇavas, looking forward to receiving honor and respect; vying for fame, recognition, and reputation; equating the rapacious, quantitative accumulation of disciples with *sampradāyic* worth; uppishly considering themselves to be superior to others though incapable of genuinely crying for the Lord's special causeless mercy, all the while forgetful of or oblivious to, nay, totally apathetic toward their internal *sac-cid-ānanda* spiritual identity (*vraja-svarūpa*), yet anxious to satisfy their greed for prestige and material gain by accessing religio-institutional power and position for securing diverse gross and subtle personal and extended sense indulgences or ego-inflations; remaining enslaved by mental concoction while keeping Kṛṣṇa in the front, can never chant the actual Holy Name of the Lord. Nor can they qualify their fawning followers to hear the Holy Name, which alone can award the highest happiness. Though the syllables of the Holy Name be ostensibly articulated, the *aparādha-nāma* or *ābhāsa-nāma kīrtana* of the egotistical can never directly help any *jīva* attain the final beatific *prayojana*, i.e., pure unalloyed *vraja-prema*. Kṛṣṇa, as a person, can on the basis of His own personal feelings like someone or not like someone according to His own sweet will. No one, even adhering to or outwardly espousing strict regulative devotional proprieties, can compel Him to selectively use one's fleshy tongue as an instrument in the service of His divine

sound *avatāra* merely by paying lip-service to the vulgar similitude of Hari-nāma or ingeniously mouthing off *sampradāyic* rhetorical jargon to the extent that one prides oneself to ably parrot something of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy. First deserve, then desire. How can we expect to fully enlighten others about the abstrusities of high-level Kṛṣṇa consciousness, to, when required, lead or instruct them to their supreme perfection, if we ourselves have not deeply penetrated the esoteric truths and devotional conclusions via our own personal introspective application of the tenets of *antaraṅga-bhakti-bhajana*, humbly following in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas*? If one, being uninformed, inexperienced, or disinclined, is incapable of even theoretically discussing the constituent principles of *rāga-mārgābhidheya*, or if one fancifully fabricates dubious, superstitious, or presumptive aberrations thereof, then how far could the disciples expect to advance under such unsatisfactory neophyte guidance fraught with utter spiritual ineptitude?

Compassion is defined as "pity inclining one to help or be merciful," implying that one should presumably possess the capacity to do so. Obviously, one can only effectively help to the limits of one's spiritual wherewithal. We *vibhinnāṁśa* souls, as minute parts and parcels of the pleasure potency of Kṛṣṇa, are compassionate by nature; it is our intrinsic constitutional *dharma*. Arousal of one's spontaneous, constitutional quality of benevolence toward others is therefore integral to the very substance of self-realization. There is, however, essentially no qualitative distinction between the pure devotional compassion displayed in terms of one's participation in the internal supramundane pleasure dalliances of the spiritual realms of *Gokula* and *Goloka* and the pure devotional compassion expressed extensibly to the fallen souls of this world by a constituent of the *ācārya's* preaching mission. Both varieties of ministrative concern, whether existentially manifest (in practice or in perfection) as *sevā* toward those who are ontologically superior or as *dayā* toward subordinates, are really aspects of the same

substance – the selfless service disposition, far beyond the bestial self-gratifying nescience of mundane egoism.

The intangible inverted reflection of a tree seen on the surface of a pool of water can have no existence without the original substantial prototype at the water's edge. Similarly, miserable, selfish, and spiritually corrupt personal and extended sense gratification on the material platform, antithetical to its divine counter, exists only on the basis of the original *ānanda-maya* tree of concentrated and extended selfless *prema* for Kṛṣṇa and His devotees on the terrace of spiritual perfection. Censurable desire for gross and subtle personal sense gratification is at the root of the tree of material existence, whereas the varieties of lustfully extended sensory or emotional indulgences expand the tree's downward spread of distressful material entanglement in terms of increased ephemeral bodily identification with mundane family, society, nationality, race, humanity, and so on. Correspondingly, with regard to Kṛṣṇa's *nitya-līlās* it should be clearly decided that personal concentrated *premika* appreciation and enthralling worship of Kṛṣṇa's supremely enchanting loveliness and lovableness is at the very root of the ever-expanding, all-entangling labyrinth of extended *para-upakāra premika* fascinations, which are notably marked by a concerned ministering to others' love-laden, deepest desires for the Lord's loving association (*aṅga-saṅga*). Without a doubt, these two tendencies – the trend toward solitary *bhakti-bhajana-kriyā* and the predilection for the more gregarious devotional service characterized by outreaching *saṅga-kīrtana* – are natural and actually essential to every soul. This is quite so because both proclivities have originated from the absolute personalities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gaurāṅga as seen in Their *mādhurya* and *audārya-līlās* respectively. As infinitesimal, eternally separated fragments of the Supreme, the *vibhinnāṁśa-jīvas* are in their own minute way inherently ever possessed of both these relevant juxtapositional divisions of purely supra-mundane *mādhurya* and

audārya expression. It stands to reason, therefore, that one may without much difficulty justifiably deduce that if preaching to induce wayward souls to reunite with Kṛṣṇa be akin to a *gopī's* selfless service of gracefully canvassing to effectuate another *gopī's* enhanced rapture of *samprayoga* (conjugal union with the Lord) in the context of the *vraja-līlās*, then the execution of solitary *bhajana* in this sphere should also sensibly correspond to its self-same essential substance seen in the Lord's *nitya-līlās* in all purity. No one would blame Rādhārāṇī for consenting to sport with Kṛṣṇa in solitude for some interlude in the course of Her showering mercy upon the whole of Vraja. Similarly, solitary *bhajana* for any relative period in the progress of the eternal life of any elevated Vaiṣṇava should not be misconstrued to be abhorrent to the high-grade pure devotional demeanor in that such may well prove to be integral to the complete whole, long-term, ongoing eternal maturation of the individual's multi-aspected Kṛṣṇa conscious experience. We must acknowledge that although solitary *bhajana* and *saṅkīrtana* appear to be divergently constituted, the objective of both ways of worship is one – to please Kṛṣṇa. It is nowhere indicated that progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness demands a unidimensional, one-sided approach to the Lord's loving service. The sincere adoption of one mode of service or another is simply a question of pertinence with regard to personal requirements in consonance with the extent of the Lord's mercy manifested in all variegatedness. In fact, today's consummately introverted *bhajanānandī* may very well be tomorrow's empowered *goṣṭhy-ānandī* preacher, or vice versa.

In the long run, practically tasting the sweetness of *vraja-prema-bhakti-rasa* itself becomes the true impetus for earnestly endeavoring to share the experience with others. It is not enough to merely distribute, distribute, distribute – superficially going through the motions on the basis of bare theoretical understanding without sufficiently developed internal devotional proficiency.

With considerable preparatory foresight, one must also conscientiously endeavor to ascertain the truth of one's ultimate *nitya-dharma* in terms of one's eternal inner spiritual identity. It is imperative that one progressively come to the point of actually relishing transcendental *rasa*, self-manifested through the precise systematic culture of *sthāyi-bhāva*, which fosters the tangible increments of *prema* from *sneha* up to the stage of *mahā-bhāva*. Please bear in mind that these upper levels of *prema* are possible only upon the attainment of *sampatti-daśā*, otherwise known as *vastu-siddhi*, the ultimate perfection of gaining Kṛṣṇa's direct shelter upon achieving the actuation of one's supra-substantial *sac-cid-ānanda siddha-deha* (perfect spiritual body) in the *bhauma-līlās* of the Lord. Nothing happens automatically or blindly by chance. Everything must be cultivated scientifically and consciously for the absolute pleasure of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa with a clear conception of deliberate cause and due consequence. One could hardly expect to achieve the supreme spiritual perfection by unapprisedly harboring anomalous devotional (what to speak of non-devotional) idiosyncrasies, which are not accommodated by the purest realm of Vraja.

To be sure, what one sees in the make-up of one's *sādhana* is basically what one could prospectively see in one's *sādhya* (outcome of spiritual practices). *Vaidhī bhakti* (fear-based, reverential devotion) alone can never in a million lifetimes lead to the stage of *rāga-bhakti* (attraction-based, spontaneous loving devotion), which is essential for the attainment of Rādhā's realm of sweetest intimacy. *Sakala jagate more kare vidhi-bhakti / vidhi-bhaktye vraja-bhāva pāite nāhi śakti.* "Everywhere in the world people worship Me according to scriptural injunctions. But simply by following such regulative principles one cannot attain the loving sentiments of the devotees in Vraja-bhūmi." (*Cc. Ādi* 3.15) Only by the merciful arrangement of a *rasika* Vaiṣṇava, wherein the regulative principles of *vaidhī sādhana-bhakti* are therapeutically directed toward the diverse *mādhurya* elements of Vraja, is it at

all possible for *vidhi* (rule) to attendantly promote the attraction and *lobha* (greed) essentially required to gain the *adhikāra* (eligibility) for *rāga-mārga-bhajana*. Even still, one would have to possess sufficient faith, fortune, and spiritual acumen to reasonably recognize the need to progressively transition by stepping up onto the platform of *rāgānugā sādhana-bhakti* in order for the rule to be said to have effectively served its real purpose. Undoubtedly, the unqualified, irresolute *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kārī* novices on the plane of rudimentary devotion, due to insufficiently evolved greed for the Vrajavāsīs' sweetest moods of selfless loving service, factually have no recourse but to rely heavily upon the force of *pāñcarātrika* rules and regulations in their attempt to rise above the material quagmire. However, simply sticking to the reverential process alone does not produce the superlative result, the highest satisfaction of the self. The *bhāva* eventually attained with great effort through exclusive fear-based, reverential adherence to the regulative principles of *vaidhī sādhana-bhakti* and the *bhāva* naturally awakened as an outcome of avidly following the course of *rāga-bhajana* are not qualitatively one and the same. *Bhāgavata-dharma*, or the cult of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is specifically and purposely, if not exclusively, aimed at the progressive cultivation of *rāgānuga-bhāva*. That is the opinion of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartipāda, whose judgment should not be overlooked in the slightest.

It is enjoined in the *śāstras* that the *guru*, upon giving *pañca-saṁskāra* initiation, bestow a spiritual name upon the disciple to help instrumentally dismantle or at least distance the disciple's previous falsely designated mundane bodily identity based on material relativities (*sarva-upādhi-vinirmuktam*) and establish a very basic, non-specific concept of being a servant of the Absolute Godhead (*kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa*). The spiritual name conferred at the time of *dīkṣā* may not directly correspond to the disciple's eternal spiritual identity and so would not, therefore, necessarily be considered the disciple's name eternally.

Nevertheless, it is spiritually useful in so far as it functions to push the novice disciple's mind-set in the right direction. So similarly, it is indeed very useful, from the stage of purified hearing (*krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā*) after achieving a considerable degree of *anartha-nivṛtti*, to culture via *artha-pravṛtti* the internally conceived *siddha-deha* in terms of the establishment of one's *ekādaśa-bhāva* under the guidance of Śrī Guru or *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas. Such internal contemplation effectively enables the eligible intermediate devotee to easily overcome various latent false egoisms, by positively fostering a conceptually graspable, unambiguous, cogently personal, spiritual identity, well beyond the external bodily notion of what it supposedly means to be a devotee. Particularly for the *mādhurya* devotee cherishing the mood of being Rādhā's *dāsy-anudāsī*, even the conception of being *dāsānudāsa* would be a false egoism, an *upādhi*, a matter of external appellation only.

It is well established that those aspects of *vaidhī sādhana-bhakti* which prove to be antagonistic to the culture of a *sādhaka's* desired *vraja-bhāva* must certainly be rejected when pursuing the path of *rāga*. Similarly, certain features of the internal *rāgānuga-sādhana* may later naturally and necessarily have to be discarded if ascertained to be no longer relevant at the stage of spontaneous realization (*svarūpa-siddhi*). Even so, the sincerely embraced "close enough for starters" *ekādaśa-bhāva* conceptualization dynamically serves to further dissolve the material bodily conception of the self and swiftly move the guileless aspirant toward perfection (*bhāva-siddhi*) by generating a very powerful and inspirational spiritually congruent virtual *vraja-svarūpa* image within the heart of the disciple. It is insufficient simply to know by negation that "I am not 'this' [illusory material] body." At a certain point, a seriously inquisitive individual must inevitably ask, "If I am not 'this' body, then what body am I?" The rather nondescript "eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa" idea of being a spiritual

entity beyond the presently acquired psycho-physical tabernacle may be quite theoretically ingrained upon the brain, yet merely understanding "I am not 'this' body" without cultivating a superior internal spiritual bodily concept of life tends to render the self an internally unsatisfying formless (*nirākāra*) spiritual no-body vulnerable to nostalgic "something is better than nothing" emotional or corporeal egoisms and the return to gross or subtle mundane *rasas*. Two areas of knowledge and realization need be clearly established in the matter of a *sādhaka's* resolve to solidly implement the practice and perfection of *vraja-bhakti-bhajana*. One must precisely comprehend the principles of *rasa-tattva* as well as the object of *rasa* and worship (*upāsya-pariṣkṛti*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and one must also be aware of the intrinsic constitutional role and nature of the worshiper (*upāsaka-pariṣkṛti*), pertinent to which is the understanding of the individual's *ekādaśa-bhāva*. Incompetent neophytes who lack pure devotional *lobha-maya-śraddhā* characterized by the appurtenant *śaraṇāgati* or disposition of selfless surrender and who have yet to surpass the stage of *krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā* (unqualified hearing) should never be directly instructed about the esoteric intricacies of the internal culture of *rāgānuga-bhajana*, lest they misconstrue everything and make a mockery of the whole affair. If, on the other hand, a worthy and spiritually eligible disciple, for whatever reason, does not get the facility of receiving essential and relevant instructions regarding the positive configuration of the appropriate internal *vraja-svarūpa* when actually required for further progress, then there is every danger that the inexperienced, unguided, or spiritually obstructed practitioner will unfortunately relapse into a life of *anarthas*, as has been regrettably evidenced time and again in contemporary Vaiṣṇava society.

It is true that at a point in time after the disappearance of Lord Gaurāṅga a number of *sampradāyic* charlatans posing as heirs to the legacies of their *siddha-rasika-vaiṣṇava ācāryas'* successions

trended to indiscriminately bestow what came to be termed as "*siddha-praṇāli-dīkṣā*" upon ineligible, materially engrossed, imitative disciples without caring to notice their so-called disciples' obviously inadequate degrees of *lobha-maya-śraddhā*. It should not surprise anyone that stalwart *mahā-bhāgavata* devotees of the Lord like Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda would take objection to such malpractice. Among other adjustments, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī saw fit to de-emphasize the revelation of *ekādaśa-bhāva* for the general mass of his followers, in deference to the all-purifying process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and is in fact known to have bestowed the *ekādaśa-bhāva* system of internal *vraja-svarūpa* conceptualization upon only a very deserving few. Contemporary disciplic successors, however, appear to be hard-pressed to muster up the empowerment required to feasibly implement the imparting of *ekādaśa-bhāva* to anyone at all, almost as if to suggest a heretofore future probability of an all-around internal devotional incompetence among the ensuing generations of *gurus* and disciples alike. Although the absolute dependency upon *siddha-praṇāli-dīkṣā* as such for the evolvement of *rāgānuga-sādhana* is denied in the Sārasvata doctrine, timely instruction (*śikṣā*) concerning the internally conceived *siddha-deha* is nevertheless essential. If members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement could not come to the position of having sufficient qualification, sincerity, and determination to merit receiving such esoteric instruction, then what might be suspected of the purificatory power and efficacy of the devotional process we follow? Just because untrained, ineligible, cheap, or hypocritical monkey-like individuals devoid of regulative devotional proprieties should not be esoterically instructed beyond their actual level of spiritual competence, as is currently being done by certain overly lenient *gurus*, it doesn't mean that all the disciples of highly qualified *gurus* should be

deemed lifetime devotional bambinos, altogether denying them access to such an invaluable internal devotional facility. Would we not be conveniently throwing poor little baby out with the bath water on the plea of ensured institutional sanctity? The king wears clothes. The king is a fool. Therefore, everyone who wears clothes is a fool! Not very logical. That money tends to get misspent by irresponsible people doesn't mean money should never be spent by those who are truly accountable.

It is certainly admissible that realization of one's *siddha-svarūpa* while still corporeally embodied and the ultimate attainment of one's *siddha-deha* upon achieving the Lord's *vraja-līlās* can be had by the mercy of the fully blossomed Holy Name who in due course gives everything to the sincere devotee. As Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda states in his *Śaraṇāgati – Śrī Nāma Māhātmya*:

pūrna vikaśita hoiyā, braje more jāya loiyā,
dekhāy more swarūpa-vilās
more siddha-deha diyā, kṛṣṇa-pāśe rākhe giyā,
e dehera kore sarva-nāś

"Blossoming fully, the flower of the holy name takes me to Vraja and reveals to me His own love-dalliance. This name gives to me my own eternal spiritual body, keeps me right by Kṛṣṇa's side, and completely destroys everything related to this mortal frame of mine."

Also, as stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 1.96):

tattva-vastu – kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa-bhakti, prema-rūpa
nāma-saṅkīrtana – saba ānanda-svarūpa

"The Absolute Truth is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and loving devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the form of [*vraja-*] *prema* is achieved through congregational chanting of the Holy Name, which is the essence of all bliss."

Again in the *Caitanya Bhāgavata* (*Madh.* 23.76-79):

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare
prabhu kahe kahilām ei mahāmantra
ihā japa giyā sabe kariyā nirbandha
ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra
sarva-kṣaṇa bala'ithe vidhi nāhi āra . . .

"The Lord said, 'Regularly chant *japa* of this *mahā-mantra*. In this way you will attain all perfections. Chant at any time and in any circumstance. There are no other rules for chanting. Gather together, five or ten, in your own homes, clap hands or play cymbals and sing *kīrtana* of these holy names.' "

And the following:

saṅkīrtana haite pāpa-saṁsāra-nāśana
citta-śuddhi, sarva-bhakti-sādhana-udgama

"By performing congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, one can destroy the sinful condition of material existence, purify the unclean heart and awaken all varieties of devotional service."

kṛṣṇa-premodgama, premāmṛta-āsvādana
kṛṣṇa-prāpti, sevāmṛta-samudre majjana

"The result of chanting is that one awakens his love for Kṛṣṇa and tastes transcendental bliss. Ultimately, one attains the association of Kṛṣṇa and engages in His devotional service, as if immersing himself in a great ocean of love." (*Cc. Antya 20.13-14*)

Though performance of *śuddha-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is, in fact, inevasibly essential for anyone's progress to the highest devotional perfection, *śāstric* evidence such as this in no way poses to abrogate the *sādhaka's* need to be esoterically instructed. *Sambandha-abhidheya-prayojana-tattva-vicāra* demands the consideration of

each individual's specific internal devotional requirements. It is not meant to remain a general discussion devoid of any concern for the individual disciple's personal spiritual objective. After all, the ascent to *prema* is a personal affair involving the delicate unfolding of personal sentiments based on personal desires to personally please the particular Personality of Godhead whom one considers to be one's personal *iṣṭa-deva*. We must always remember that we are persons. Kṛṣṇa is a person, the Holy Name is a person, and we are all unique individual persons who need to personally conceptualize the unique personal goal of our chanting before we can expect our chanting of the Holy Name to yield the superlative personalized fruit of love for Kṛṣṇa we personally require to be all we can personally be to be personally satisfied that Kṛṣṇa is personally satisfied with our personal attempts to please Him in all personified personal sweetness. Chanting with specific wrong conceptions bears specific wrong results, chanting with no specific conception bears no specific result, chanting with specific inferior conceptions yields specific inferior results, and, unsurprisingly, as one might reasonably gather, chanting the Holy Name with specific superexcellent conceptions yields specific superexcellent results. *Ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham . . .* It's not all one.

The obvious implication of the above *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* verse is as follows: Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* clearly delineates two basic levels of devotion – *sādhana-bhakti* (*bhakti* in practice done by *ajāta-rati sādhaka-bhaktas*) and *sādhya-bhakti* (*bhakti* in perfection done by *jāta-rati bhāvukas* and *siddha-bhaktas*). *Sādhana-bhakti* includes two distinct paths – *vaidhī-mārga* and *rāga-mārga* – correspondingly leading to two distinct types of perfection – *maryādā-prema* (reverential love) and *kevala-mādhurya-prema* (unadulterated sweetest intimate love). Although embracing an element of spontaneity, *rāga-mārga-sādhana* is not to be equated with spontaneous devotional service.

Rather, it is deemed spontaneous devotional service in practice wherein a *sādhaka* covetously endeavors to internally emulate the perfect spontaneous mood of one of Kṛṣṇa's intimate eternal *rāgātmikā* associates. Only fortunate practitioners adequately endowed with *lobha-maya-śraddhā* may legitimately take up this path. To the extent that one has not gained steadfastness in the pursuit of *rāga-bhajana*, to that extent one is obliged to allow *śāstra-vidhi* to prompt one's adherence to the external practices of devotional service. As one's affinity for *bhajana* prevails, *lobha* itself becomes the driving force, and the need to rely on *śāstra-vidhi* becomes relatively superfluous. Likewise, *sādhya-bhakti* is divided into two progressive levels – *bhāva* (preliminary love of Godhead) and *prema* (advanced love of Godhead). The stage of relishing *prema-rasa*, realized at the highest level of purity, comes only after the arousal of *sthāyī-bhāva* by the influence of *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika*, and *vyabhicārī*, generated from the fragrance of the flower of *rati* or *bhāva*. *Prema* never appears before *svarūpa-siddhi*, which is realized at the stage of *bhāva*. The stage of *bhāva* and *āpana-daśā* are basically synonymous. *Bhāvāpana-daśā* is the *sādhya*, or outcome of intensified *sādhana*, which progresses through the stages of *śravaṇa-daśā*, *varaṇa-daśā*, and *smaraṇa-daśā* culminating in *bhakti-samādhi*. As previously indicated, *śravaṇa-daśā* appears in two phases – *krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā* (haphazard or unqualified hearing without aspiration to a particular *rasa*) and *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā* (systematic, offenseless hearing with the ultimate aim of pleasing Kṛṣṇa). If as a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī śraddhāvān jana* one hears *kṛṣṇa-līlā* in an unfocused way without having undergone sufficient purification via advanced devotional association, clouds of *anarthas* will obstruct the discernment of one's natural inclination toward a particular *rasa*. Such hearing designated as *krama-hīna-śravaṇa* may in fact retard the arousal of one's latent proclivity for *rāgānuga-bhakti* if one does not scientifically endeavor to improve one's approach to

the hearing process. However, when faithful upper class neophytes who are *antarmukha* (looking inward in the spirit of self-discovery) attentively and methodically hear (*nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā*) about Kṛṣṇa's *nitya-līlās* and *naimittika-līlās* under the wholesome guidance of experienced *rāgānuga-sādhakas* and *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas, they, by such *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa*, swiftly and without difficulty dissipate the clouds of *anarthas* (*naṣṭa-prāyeṣu abhadreṣu*) and come to the *niṣṭhā* platform (*bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*). Purposeful *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa* appreciably manifests the enchanting sweetness of the Lord's pastimes, spontaneously arousing the hearer's latent predilection for *rāgānuga-bhakti*. As *anarthas* (material lust and greed) decrease in the course of extensive hearing (*ceta etair anāviddham*), one gradually recognizes within oneself a special natural appreciation for particular pastimes of the Lord enacted with a particular *rāgātmika* associate endowed with a specific *rasa*. This indicates one's natural constitutional inclination toward a particular *rasa*. The awakening of a basic yet firm eagerness to attain a kind of relationship with the Lord similar to that of one's esteemed *rāgātmika* archetype constitutes one's specific innate *lobha*.

It should be emphasized here that the details of a disciple's *ekādaśa-bhāva* are generally to be sussed out between the disciple and the *guru* during the *krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā* stage in light of the disciple's specific *lobha*. *Ācārya-vāṇī* has it that these constituents of *rāga-mārga-sādhana* may be inculcated to the disciple quite early in the course of events if the *guru* sees that the disciple's association is pure, elevated, and *siddhāntically* solid. When, satisfied that the *guru* has correctly ascertained one's inner greed for achieving a specific devotional perfection, one vows to heartily accept the compatible *bhāva* for continuous cultivation, only then does one come to the stage of *varaṇa-daśā*, which is the very basis of *rāgānuga-bhajana-niṣṭhā*. Having become "fixed-up" and satisfied on the brahminical platform of goodness (*sthitaṁ sattve*

prasīdati), one becomes freed from the major lot of gross material distractions. At this point one may gradually focus and absorb one's mind and heart (from *smaraṇa*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, *anusmṛti*, to *samādhi*) in the remembrance of one's given *vraja-svarūpa* while cultivating the mental service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's eightfold daily pastimes (*aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-mānasa-sevā*). *Āpana-daśā*, as a sequel to all this, comes quite later in the chain. Hence, it would be erroneous to conclude that *rāgānuga-sādhana* and the prerequisite greed (*lobha*) to pursue the path of *rāga* would commence from the stage of *bhāva*. Moreover, it would be terribly clumsy to suggest that *sādhakas* must first attain *vaidhika bhāva-siddhi* on the path of reverential devotion before gaining the credibility and the go-ahead to even dare to consider the prospect of pursuing the principles of *rāgānuga-sādhana*. It is preposterous to in any way deduce that *sādhana-bhakti* would begin after *sādhya-bhakti* (*bhāvāpana-daśā*) has been achieved. *Jāta-rati* Vaiṣṇavas are mature (accomplished) *bhāva-bhaktas*, not immature (unaccomplished) *sādhana-bhaktas*.

After the attainment of *svarūpa-siddhi*, a *siddha-bhakta* anxiously cries for the attainment of *vastu-siddhi*, to be reinstated in his or her original constitutional relationship with the Lord. This state of intense eagerness is technically termed *lālasāmayī*. It is incorrect to equate *lālasāmayī*, which is manifested in the perfectional stage, with *lobha*, the basic element needed for embarking on the path of *rāgānuga-sādhana* while in the state of bondage, the position of imperfection. It is not that one must be perfect (*jāta-rati*) before one can practice to become perfect. If *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name can bring the *sādhaka* to the highest perfectional platform of unalloyed *kṛṣṇa-prema*, why should we not expect the Holy Name to grace the *sādhaka* with the relatively lesser *adhikāra* required to merit hearing esoteric *ekādaśa-bhāva* instructions from the lips of Śrī Guru – instructions that are actually required for the tangible practice of proper *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-smaraṇa* and *mānasa-sevā* in pursuit of the internal

achievement of *rāgānuga bhāva-siddhi*, *svarūpa-siddhi*. Whether or not the present generation of *gurus* has the *adhikāra* to adequately deliver the goods is a question in and of its own. God knows; it's a question that the *guru*-figureheads themselves will ultimately have to honestly acknowledge and answer. But in principle it should not be presumed that just because the general mass of people tends to be prone to degradation and hypocrisy, genuine people don't exist, and that such genuine people should not be instructed and encouraged according to their genuine internal spiritual needs. It is neither altogether surprising nor blameful that an astute disciple, upon ascertaining a drought of *siddhāntically* viable confidential guidance at the feet of *guru*, might opt to go hither and thither in search for someone who might ably fill the bill. One could hardly expect to acquire the requisite knowledge of the moods of Kṛṣṇa's *nitya-parikara* and their *anugata-sevā* just like that, without receiving proper direction.

At which stage in one's devotional progress does esoteric instruction concerning the culture of one's internal spiritual identity become relevant? We should remember that *rāga-mārga* is fully independent and distinct from *vidhi-mārga*. The consideration of scriptural injunctions and favorable arguments and reasonings which support strict adherence to the *vaidhī bhakti* paradigm is ultimately inconsequential to the sprouting of *lobha*, as is the consideration of one's level of progress on the *vidhi-mārga*. It has been ascertained by the *ācāryas* that it is the grace and compassion of the Lord and His devotees alone that causes the awakening of an individual's craving for the path of *rāga*. Hence, even though *vidhi* may play a part in the matter of subduing a neophyte's inordinate materially contaminated *rāga*, it cannot be said that *vidhi* and the strictness of one's adherence to *vaidhika* principles in and of itself has any direct bearing on one's *adhikāra* for pursuing the path of *rāga*. Due to *purva-saṁskaras* caused by graceful devotional association in previous lives, someone may easily gain suitable *sādhu-saṅga* in

the present life and have the good fortune and receptivity required for *lobha's* seemingly very early appearance. Another, for whatever reason, may not come under or become awake to the *vraja-bhakti* influence until much later on if at all. It may be readily concluded, therefore, that at whatever time one becomes the object of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's, Guru-Gaurāṅga's, or a *rasika* Vaiṣṇava's special causeless mercy, at that time only one becomes fortunate enough to gain profound attraction to and subsequent greed for the cultivation of *vraja-bhakti*, irrespective of one's higher or lower degree of *vaidhika* development. Then only by Divine Grace does the genuine need to be esoterically instructed arise. The dictum most sanctimoniously bandied about, "First deserve – then desire," should be rightly understood. One deserves to desire simply when, by the grace of God, one's desire is big enough. *Tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ.* One's desire is big enough when there is no room in one's heart for any other desire. Ultimately, the bottom line is this: Dire necessity knows no law.

It is important to mention that the *ācāryas'* use of the terms *bahiraṅga* (external) and *antaraṅga* (internal) with reference to *rāga-mārga-bhajana* methodologies denotes two distinct processes of *rāgānuga-sādhana*. The *bahiraṅga* system, which under the auspices of Lord Gauāṅga was taught by Svarūpa Damodara Gosvāmī to Vakreśvara Paṇḍita who in turn imparted the same to his disciple Gopal Guru Gosvāmī, was communicated to further generations through the writings of their successor disciple, Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī. The more esoteric internal method of *mādhurya-bhajana* culture, on the other hand, was bestowed by Svarūpa Damodara Gosvāmī upon Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī who gave deep expression to that substance throughout his many literary contributions. Though both systems are authorized and useful, either separately or combinedly, upon careful scrutiny, the characteristic slant of the two distinctive approaches becomes evident. Put simply, the external gradual course primarily integrates elements of *arcana-vidhi* with a focus on the precise

conceptual configuration of appropriate *rāga-maya* form in consonance with the *vraja-līlā* paradigm. In contrast, the intuitive internal process, stressing culture of the unalloyed devotional attitude, highlights the supranatural resurgence of the *aprākṛta-svarūpa's* intrinsic or constitutive spirit via the sympathetic rightful assimilation of and response to pre-established *vraja-bhāva* expressions, dynamically fostering a guileless devotee's unfeigned eligibility for consequent *rāga-maya* revelation. *Śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya.* Although an in-depth discussion about these topics would certainly be in order, at this juncture it should suffice to draw the reader's attention to the fact that it is undeniably *Prayojana Ācārya* Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's esoteric *antaraṅga* method of *rāgānuga* cultivation which eminently stands at the core of Rūpānuga Vaiṣṇavism.

Some devotees, though not understanding the intricacies of their own spiritual identities, may for all intents be esteemed as elevated *uttama-adhikārīs*, given that they have somehow cent per cent surrendered body, mind, and words to the service of the Lord and His Holy Name with undivided faith, realizing Hari (*nāmī*) and Hari-nāma to be identical. That is the opinion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as evidenced in Jagadānanda Paṇḍita's *Prema-vivarta*. Still, it would not be unreasonable to infer that these individuals, far from being fully self-realized, really need to make considerable progress to be all they can potentially be as representative Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava spiritual masters in disciplic succession. To be sure, the internal *bhāva* and pure devotional outlook of a *kevala-mādhurya-premika-bhakta* (Vrajavāsī or Vrajavāsinī) would no doubt have to be conscientiously and meticulously cultivated here and now in this current lifespan if one were to expect to achieve the highest perfection this time around. Otherwise, one could hardly expect to fully transcend all substandard notions (material or spiritual) about oneself before quitting the present physical body. It's not good enough to remain

a fallible neophyte with an ambiguous sense of belonging to the spiritual realm. Everything will be tested at the time of death, the outcome determined by one's previously cultured *bhāva. Yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvam, tyajaty ante kalevaram.* It is not such a cheap or haphazard affair that "Oh well, anyway, somehow or other. What me worry." No! Not that we apathetically await a windfall of mercy while mulishly ignoring the purposeful, scientific pursuit of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya's highest ideal.

It is a fact that the vast majority of those claiming to have been initiated by a bona fide *guru* in proper disciplic succession in terms of either *bhāgavata-vidhi* or *pāñcarātrika-vidhi* will not upon the end of the present lifetime be fortunate enough to attain the Lord's manifest *vraja-līlās*. If we want to be included among the small percentage that actually succeeds, we will have to seriously focus and intensify our *bhajana. Kṛpā-siddhi* is very rare – an extremely atypical improbability. Though we in all our inadequacies hope and pray for such divine dispensation, we cannot sophistically force the exception to become our rule. That is not in our hands. The standard success formula, which largely stresses our willful application of appropriate devotional practices, should not be artfully ignored. We must scrupulously deepen and deepen our inner quest. *Jīvasya tattva-jijñāsu.* There should be no other purpose behind any of our life's activities. *Nārtho yas ceha karmabhiḥ.* That is deservingness. Do not heed the die-hard religio-institutional dogmatists. It's not enough that children pretend to be adults ad nauseam. A tad of spiritual common sense may have to be mustered to grasp this point.

Revelation is gained through *prīti-bhajana*. To one lovingly engaged in devotional service (*rāga-bhakti*) Vrajendranandana Kṛṣṇa from within supplies the intelligence required for achieving His eternal association – not to one fearfully engaged merely on the basis of *śāstra-vidhi* (rudimentary scriptural rules). *Prīti-bhajana* undoubtedly connotes the *rāgātmikā-bhakti* of either the

'mukhya'-vraja-janas or the *sādhana-siddhas* and *kṛpā-siddhas* who have been elevated from conditional existence to the status of eternal Vrajavāsī associates of the Lord. The foremost feature of this *prīti-bhajana* principle is found in the young *vraja-gopīs*' mode of spontaneous loving service. *Ramyā kācid upāsanā vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā*. There is no higher expression of *prīti* to be seen anywhere else. Dumping family ties, household duties, reputation, feminine bashfulness, as well as all moral considerations, they run in the dead of night with resolute enthusiasm to satisfy the senses of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa reciprocally unfolds His innermost heartfelt feelings in proportion to the intensity and depth of His devotee's loving sentiments. The young damsels of Vraja, distinct from devotees in *vātsalya-*, *sakhya-*, and *dāsya-rasas*, are ever infatuated and enthralled to intimately engage with Him day and night (*satata-yuktānāṁ*) in keeping with the *aṣṭa-kālīya-nitya-līlā* format. It is of little wonder that Kṛṣṇa would feel naturally inclined to reveal to them His highest penchant for the pleasures of paramour love (*parakīya-rasa*), awarding them the intelligence (*dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ*) by which they may overcome all obstacles (so-called husbands, in-laws, superiors) in their endeavors to unite with Him as their *upapati* (*yena mām upayānti te*).

Yet it may be observed in this connection that the *parakīya* disposition of one belonging to another catalytically diffuses its influence from different angles all over the land of Vraja to augment both in the Lord and in His devotees an apprehension of mutual unattainability in various ways. This effectively intensifies the nuances of love (*prīti*) in all the primary *rasas*. It is certainly a fact that when applied to the delusive sense of Kṛṣṇa's belonging to another (as the son of Vasudeva and Devakī, as the scion of the Yadu dynasty, or as a denizen of any realm other than the land of Vraja), the *parakīya* notion hurls His parents, friends, and servants into a deluge of acute loving desperation. Here, resultantly, the devotee's mind and heart are seen to run mad after Kṛṣṇa in a way undreamed of in any other quarter of

the spiritual world. The dread of separation from Kṛṣṇa dramatically increases His value in the eyes of His devotee.

With regard to the *mādhurya-rasa*, however, the *parakīya-tattva* finds its ascendancy not in the supposition that Kṛṣṇa belongs to any other (as aforementioned), but rather in the fancy that the young newly wed *gopī* girls themselves belong to others – their lawful so-called cowherd husbands – and that Kṛṣṇa must assume the wife-thief-like *upapati-bhāva* in His efforts to woo their hearts. The superexcellent speciality of this *parakīya* angle of influence is that it augments the succulence of *rasa* not so much by intensifying the devotee's desperation to serve the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, but by amazingly amplifying Kṛṣṇa's desperation to serve the feet of His devotee. Out of extreme anxiety to meet the nearly unobtainable, Śyāmasundara forgets Himself, babbles incoherent nonsense, and wanders aimlessly around in circles like a madman. His disquietude over being separated from His *gopī* beloveds increases their worth in His eyes, making His mind and heart run after them, with special deference to the supremely luscious lotus feet of Śrī Rādhikā.

It may be additionally noted in this connection that there are two brilliantly illuminating developmental features of *gopī-prema* described in the *śāstras*: *ghṛta-sneha*, love like ghee, which is not sweet in and of itself; and *madhu-sneha*, loving affection like honey, which is always permeated with the sweetest deliciousness. Although married to another (Govardhana Malla), a situation which augments the *parakīya-bhāva* in that sense, Śrī Candrāvalī, the right-wing-*gopī* embodiment of *ghṛta-sneha*, characteristically traverses the inner path of thinking, "I belong to Him." As Kṛṣṇa congruously reciprocates His devotee's *bhāva*, it is seen that He sometimes in the course of His all-accommodating frolics condescends to nourish Candrāvalī's affectionate feelings – but He's still His own man. Yet Śrī Rādhikā, the left-wing-*gopī* embodiment of *madhu-sneha*, exerts an entirely different *parakīya* influence over Lord Kṛṣṇa on the basis of Her thinking, "He belongs to me!" As Kṛṣṇa responds to Rādhā's

feelings, He finds that He is no longer His own man. He belongs to another (*parakīya*). He is Hers. No longer is He independent. Rather, He, the supreme beloved, becomes the henpecked lover of She who now dominantly disports the dignity of being supremely loved by Him. She becomes His beloved. He madly runs to give Himself to Her, and She, from time to time, condescends to allow Him to become Her devoted servant, making Him dance like a puppy dog in Her hands. She becomes the prepossessing possessor of Him who is ever-increasingly possessed by Her totally enticing, honey-like, transcendentally preponderant ever-new supra-mundane feelings of absolute possessiveness. Thus, in Her absence, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, transcendentally engulfed in His own amorous delusions, finds Himself dancing behind a most skillful dancing-master, Śrī Rādhikā's roving image, appearing before His lovesick gaze in every Vṛndāvana tree and creeper in every direction.

Parakīya-tattva similarly goes on to manifest another charming permutation. Rādhā's maidservants, like Rādhā, also cherish not the humor of belonging to Kṛṣṇa. They are *rādhikā-snehādhika sakhīs* who, though married to other cowherd boys, treasure the status of belonging to Rādhikā. Upon seeing a *mañjārī's* sincere and unwavering devotion to Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet, a devotion filled with boundless love greater even than the love He Himself feels for His own devotees, charming Kṛṣṇa will embrace her, take the betel nuts from His own mouth and place them in hers, and place His own forest garland upon her. Why? She is not His. She belongs to another (*parakīya*). She is Hers. Having taken shelter of the indomitable fortress of Rādhā's lotus feet, she has conquered Him outright. As seen in *Śrī Sanat-kumāra Saṁhitā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa instructs Sadā-śiva, "A person who once surrenders to Her [Rādhā], saying, 'I am Yours,' attains Me also – without doing any extraneous *sādhana*. Of this there is no doubt. Therefore, O Śiva, one who desires to conquer Me should surrender wholeheartedly to Her. In this way, one becomes extremely dear to me." In *Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi*,

Maṇi-mañjarī says to the young, inexperienced Caturā, "Caturā, let me teach you what I have learned from my own experience. If you make friends with Rādhārāṇī, then within that friendship is automatically included ecstatic love for Hari." Again, Kṛṣṇa says in the *Ādi Purāṇa*, "One who claims to be My devotee is not My devotee. But one who claims to be the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee." Elsewhere, in the *Padma Purāṇa*, Lord Kṛṣṇa intimates to Nārada, "Therefore, if you want to impress Me, then become wholly devoted to Rādhā."

Kṛṣṇa has personally given Himself to Rādhā, and as might be expected, He very much appreciates and identifies with those elevated individuals who fortunately follow suit. Indeed, He becomes madly enamored of the *mañjarīs*' *sakhī-snehādhika*-based unstinted bodily beauty, a sublimely scented beauty far surpassing that of the *sakhīs* possessed of other *bhāvas*. Hence, birds of a feather are seen to flock together. Since the *mañjarīs* are so intimately intertwined with Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa's heart is ever given to Rādhikā, the proximity of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā's *kiṅkarīs* is not so astonishing. Pure devotees have no desire for *mukti*. They desire only *śuddha-bhakti*. Yet *mukti* is automatically achieved by them without their directly endeavoring for it. In the same way, though having not even the slightest desire to directly associate with the rascally Kṛṣṇa, having no desire other than to serve Rādhā's lotus feet, Rādhā's maidservants naturally gain optimum access to the loftiest communion with Rādhārāṇī's *svayaṁ-rūpa* Kṛṣṇa, unimaginable to Rādhā's other categories of *sakhīs* and Kṛṣṇa's various other *yutheśvarī* mistresses. If tenderhearted Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī affectionately shows Her *kiṅkarī* to Her Kṛṣṇa, who walks the path of debauchery, ordering her to play the role of a transcendental love thief, please hear how that maidservant will faithfully serve Her. With smiling sidelong glances, and with the hairs of her body standing up with joy, she will tightly embrace Him. In this way, she will taste the nectar of Rādhikā's *caraṇa-sevā*. Even though

Kṛṣṇa tells the *mañjarī*, "The queen of My life is very merciful to you," and even though He again and again kisses her, embraces her, and maddens her with the nectar of amorous pleasures, and even though He creates in her a wonderful wealth of sweetest love, the *mañjarī's* thoughts nevertheless remain ever absorbed in the nectar pastimes of Śrī Rādhikā's lotus feet. When the *mañjarīs'* necks are embraced by the magnificent arms of Rādhā's lover in the sweet and wonderful *rāsa* dance festival, splendid with tinkling bracelets, anklets, and other ornaments, they will always fix their gaze on the footprints of their queen, having no motive other than to please Her. Seeing the *mañjarī's* unrivaled love for Rādhikā, a love that has outclassed even His own, and seeing the *mañjarī's* purest motive to intently serve to fulfill Her purposes, enthusiastic Kṛṣṇa inundates her with His own amplified love-bliss, unknown even to His own devotees. Even so, the *mañjarī's* resolve to sympathetically savor Rādhikā's sweetest ecstasies, which exceed Kṛṣṇa's *ānanda* ten million fold, keeps her always fixed and victorious.

This same *parakīya* permutation, however, has another important function. There are many times (perhaps more often than not) when a *mañjarī* must thoroughly resist Kṛṣṇa's advances in order to safeguard her integrity as Rādhā's confidential *kiṅkarī*. The *parakīya* sense of belonging to Rādhā rather than to Kṛṣṇa fortunately affords her the necessary footing and firmness to successfully accomplish the task. This bears special significance particularly for the *sādhana-siddha mañjarīs*, who are *vibhinnāṁśa-jīvātmās* possessed of limited potency. They are *aṇu*, very insignificant, whereas Kṛṣṇa is *vibhu*, unlimitedly great and omnipotent. On her own, the *sādhana-siddha mañjarī* could hardly hope to withstand the onslaught of Kṛṣṇa's unlimited attractiveness, sweetness, beauty, and handsomeness. How could she resist Him? Can a particle of iron escape the force field of a great magnet? Highly unlikely. Yet, if there is the influence of a greater magnetism, if the *sādhana-siddha mañjarī* is constantly bound

by the force of greater attraction, greater sweetness, and greater beauty, she can easily deflect His absolute unlimited wantonness. That is Śrī Rādhikā. *Daivīṁ prakṛtim āśritāḥ*. Without Her shelter, who could stand a chance? Rādhikā, the supreme *svarūpa-śakti* counterpart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is also *vibhu*. She too is unlimited, as are Her many *kāya-vyūha* confidantes. As such, Rādhikā, on the basis of Her transcendental preponderance, can effectively ward off the rapacious cupidity of Her lover, when She deems it necessary to play hard-to-get. So too, under the auspices of Rādhā, can Her privileged *vibhinnāṁśa kiṅkarī*, through her bond of affection to Rādhā reinforced by her *sakhī-guru's* potent directives which totally accord with Rādhā's wishes. On the strength of Rādhā's prevailing influence and her rigid disinclination to breach Rādhā's trust, the *mañjarī* boasts the requisite authority and prerogative to say "no" to Kṛṣṇa. Resisting, she may address Kṛṣṇa in the following words: "Hey, you *lampaṭa*! Control Your senses! Forget it! I'm not Yours for the taking. I belong to Svāminī! I'm just Her insignificant messenger. Merciless boy, be kind to me. Let go of the edge of my *sārī*. Look! The sun is setting. I have to go to evening *ārati* now. It is not Your fault that You cannot understand my dear friend's message and You slight Her valuable gift. You are just too unintelligent to understand. Kṛṣṇa, why do You raise the fearsome cupid's bows of Your eyebrows in that way? O Kṛṣṇa, O moon of Vraja, if You neglect my friend and instead try to make advances upon me, I shall give up my life on the spot!" In this way, the *jīva*, though very insignificant, also facilely acquires the power to purposefully play hard-to-get.

At this juncture, the *parakīya* influence displays another noteworthy facet. Unattainability on the basis of Rādhā's dominion appreciably places the *sādhana-siddha mañjarī* in a much fairer light. Due to the inaccessibility of Rādhā's maidservant, which generates an increased fascination within Kṛṣṇa's heart, the value of the infinitesimal becomes greatly magnified. Something easily obtained can be easily taken for granted or abandoned. Something rarely

gained even after considerable struggle becomes highly treasured. Kṛṣṇa can easily overlook, disregard, or cast aside the minute *jīva*. What is the appeal of an insignificant spark compared with that of an unlimited fire? Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are said to be like a single ghee lamp with two immaculate, brightly blazing, infinite love-flames. They are ontologically one soul, yet, inconceivably, They morphologically manifest as two, differentiated, synergistically infatuating and infatuated, limitlessly lovable supreme personalities. In the contest of Their infinitely sublime love-infatuations, neither admits defeat. Their absolute love-play is perfect and complete. Yet we see that They, in the course of Their *līlās*, from time to time make Themselves scarce, so as to augment each other's worth before one another. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa disappears to increase the *gopīs*' love for Himself, or at other times, when, for instance, She finds that Kṛṣṇa has started the *rāsa-līlā* before Her arrival to the *rāsa-maṇḍala*, Rādhikā, unseen by anyone, indignantly goes into hiding across the Yamunā to mope a Māna-sarovara lake of tears. No one likes to be taken cheaply. Everyone likes to be appreciated. Why? Because the same psychology is originally there in the Absolute. If the infinite counterpart aspects of the Absolute see the need to actively expand each other's estimation of one another's worth, then how much more of such necessity exists for the relatively inconsequential *vibhinnāṁśa-jīvas* in their approach to the Lord's reciprocal relationship. The plight of the *jīva* is such that her finitude hardly adds up to very much in face of the unlimited fancy of the Absolute. Oversimplifying the matter, some would suggest that the unlimitedness of Kṛṣṇa's heart can certainly accommodate and magnify even the smallest-of-the-smallest spark of *prema*. Although that is not incorrect, still, it may be objectively observed that when the *jīva* spark becomes especially splendorous by dancing in proximity to Śrī Rādhikā's unlimitedly dazzling *vāma-madhyā* love-flame, Kṛṣṇa's appreciation of the *jīva* becomes extraordinarily enriched and distinctly sustainable. That is the sum and substance of *hare-kṛṣṇa-mahā-mantra-saṅkīrtana*.

Do not bother yourself to become too much infatuated with Kṛṣṇa. Rather, act in such a way that Lord Kṛṣṇa may become ever more infatuated with you.

In the realm of Vraja, *parakīya-tattva* glistens with yet another powerful radiance. *Mañjarī-tattva*, though commonly understood to be constituted of a singular mind-set, is in fact quite bejeweled with diversity. Just as there are left-wing (*vāma*) and right-wing (*dakṣiṇā*) *yūtheśvarī-gopīs* and *sakhīs* with many varieties of devotional dispositions, so also there are many varieties of left- and right-wing *mañjarīs*. Rati Mañjarī is *dakṣiṇā-mṛdvī* by nature, right wing and very soft and sweet. As evidenced in Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*, Rati Mañjarī, from her right-wing vantage point, stands as perhaps the greatest exemplar of the mood of belonging to her *yūtheśvarī*, Śrī Rādhikā. "I am Yours! I am Yours! I cannot live without You! O queen, please understand this and bring me to Your lotus feet." Among the *aṣṭa-mañjarīs*, Śrī Lavaṅga Mañjarī is also *dakṣiṇā-mṛdvī*, and Śrī Rasa Mañjarī has qualities similar to hers. However, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī is *vāma-madhyā* (left wing and midway between soft and harsh), Śrī Guṇa Mañjarī is *dakṣiṇā-prakharā* (right wing and harsh), Śrī Mañjulālī Mañjarī is *vāma-madhyā* like Rūpa, Śrī Vilāsa Mañjarī is *vāma-mṛdvī* (left wing and sweet), and Śrī Kaustūrī Mañjarī is similarly *vāma-mṛdvī* in nature. The famous Śrī Anaṅga Mañjarī, like Śrī Rūpa, is also *vāma-madhyā* in temperament. As among countless snowflakes no two are exactly alike, so too there are untold varieties of *mañjarī-bhāva*. It is, therefore, not at all astonishing that different *mañjarīs* are possessed of different cherished ambitions as well as different feelings toward their *yūtheśvarī*. Just as Rādhā's left-wing *madhu-sneha* sense of possessiveness differs from Candrāvalī's right-wing *ghṛta-sneha* sense of being possessed, regarding their feelings toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so the *sakhī-sneha* moods of the various *mañjarīs* also differ. Like Rati Mañjarī, many feel within themselves a deep sense of belonging to Rādhā. Others, however, boldly embrace the

prominent sense of Rādhā's belonging to them. And, as one might surmise, Rādhā mercifully reciprocates their feelings. Kṛṣṇa belongs to Rādhā, but to whom does Rādhā belong? She does not belong to Kṛṣṇa. Nor is She self-possessed. She undeniably belongs to another (*parakīya*). She belongs to Her *mañjarī* maidservant. Kṛṣṇa, in response to Rādhikā's *bhāva*, again and again runs to give Himself to Her, but do you think He always finds it so easy? Certainly not! He's at the mercy of the *mañjarī*s, who may not all be so kindly disposed toward His unabashed wicked licentiousness. He often finds Himself futilely begging at the feet of Rādhā's relentless left-wing *mañjarī* maidservants who derisively keep Him at bay, playfully enhancing the effectiveness of the *vipralambha-rasa*, which greatly nourishes the Divine Couple's mutually intensified emotional ecstasies at the ripest time of Their imminent union.

Devotees who aspire after the Divine Couple's eternal, transcendentally utopian realm of *svakīyā-mayī sambhoga-līlās* (Raṅga Mahal) generally think the *parakīya*-punctuated *vipralambha-bhāva* to be antagonistic to the favorable fulfillment of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's desire for continuous relishment of *sambhoga-rasa* (*nitya-nikuñja-vihāra*). They argue that in the spiritual world, the *ānanda* savored by the Divine Couple in the company of Their intimate associates ever-increasingly expands for eternity anyway, so why wish upon Them the distress of separation if the intention is to make Them happy? They are already ever-increasingly happy to be in each other's company, so why disturb Them on the plea of increasing Their happiness? Just let Them be happy. This idea, which does not accommodate the interplay of the diverse *rasas* of Vraja-dhāma, is, however, analogous to an immature neophyte disciple's inability to understand the positive purpose of the *guru's* castigation. Śrī Guru mercifully excruciates a disciple simply to strengthen, upgrade, and intensify the disciple's determination for spiritual progress. Yet the less intelligent neophyte prefers to be flattered than to bear the weight of the *guru's* reprimand, which seems

intolerable. It is certainly a fact that the *ānanda* of the Lord and His eternal associates eternally expands without limit. Still, on closer examination it can be clearly observed that, corresponding to the diverse *līlā* configurations prelimited to various sectors of Goloka, Kṛṣṇa and His entourage know either eternally ever-increasing *ānanda*, eternally ever-increasing more intensified *ānanda*, or eternally ever-increasing most intensified *ānanda*. The *parakīya* element in *vraja-līlā* certainly intensifies in various ways the *prīti-bhajana* of the Lord's *rāgātmikā* associates. This enhances the Lord's *ānanda-maya* reciprocal dealings with them in a myriad of ways, making them the objects of His special consideration and affection. As Kṛṣṇa becomes mad after the *gopīs*, who are accomplished in their varieties of *parakīya* absorption, which overstep the regulative principles of the *śāstras*, so also, by extension of His compassionate nature, Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes very much inclined toward those *sādhakas* who, recognizing and aspiring after the super-excellence of the *vraja-gopīs' parakīya* loving sentiments, constantly drink deep of the ambrosial *prīti*-saturated *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlās* of Vraja. He thus mercifully helps them by providing necessary intelligence (the ability to see things in proper perspective) and appropriate knowledge of the progressive path of *mādhurya-maya-vraja-bhakti-bhajana* (*jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*), by which they themselves may ultimately achieve the perfectional platform of unalloyed *prīti* for His absolute pleasure. In phis way, Vrajendranandana Kṛṣṇa kindly dissipates the darkness of ignorance (*ajñāna-jaṁ tamaḥ nāśayāmi*) that prompts a *sādhaka's* attachment to any other objective.

Left to themselves, the fumbling *rāgānuga* dabblers will ever disastrously stumble along as unauthorized intruders into the path of *rasa* and their *lobhā* and *bhāva* will never crystallize. However, when, by the Lord's mercy, genuine *lobhā* appears in the heart, one gradually becomes enlightened in different ways. Uddhava says in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.29.6): "Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself through the *ācārya* (spiritual master) or through the agency of

caitya-guru, the Supersoul." Thus some devotees attain knowledge about the moods of Kṛṣṇa and His Vraja associates from the mouth of a *rasika-vaiṣṇava-guru*, some from the mouth of a learned *rāgānuga* devotee, and some, whose hearts have been purified by the practice of devotional service, will have this knowledge directly revealed to them from within their hearts. From the stage of basic *anartha-nivṛtti*, when *guru* and Kṛṣṇa will be satisfied with the intensity of our anxiety, our desperation, our ardent avidity, and our *niṣṭhā* for attaining our natural eternal mood of loving ecstasy, *bhāva-siddhi,* there will certainly be further and further enlightenment by gradual revelation both from within and from without. Then practical attainment of our authentic, eternal *prayojana*, our requisite *premika* relationship as an assistant of Śrī Guru in his or her eternal services to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, will be sure and solid by Their grace. At that stage only, fullest empowerment to act as an agent of Kṛṣṇa's compassion, both internally as a *vraja-gopa* or *gopī* serving in His *nitya-līlās* and externally as a preacher moving within this psycho-physical dimension, becomes possible – not otherwise.

This material world will be repeatedly manifested and unmanifested for the rest of eternity. It is not that this insignificant point on the eternal time continuum is the all-important consideration. For all of eternity there will be innumerable fallen conditioned souls who will need to be delivered to the supreme perfection by the influence of someone's highly qualified and most capable, fully self-realized, super-consciously empowered preaching efforts. Furthermore, a most profound truth is that Kṛṣṇa, being an extremely witty connoisseur, very often requests the emancipated *jīva* who has in the *sac-cid-ānanda* spiritual body attained His pleasure pastimes at His abode of Goloka to return in the *ācārya-svarūpa* to this material cosmos as a *nitya-muktāvatāra*. Such a *mukta-jīva* may then act as the greatest emissary of the Lord's compassion to the *baddha-jīvas* bound by the network of Mahā Māyā's allurements. Having become the recipient of the fullest extent of Kṛṣṇa's mercy, only the

said emancipated *jīva*, as a fully enlightened *gopa* or *gopī*, has the most splendid, incomparably beatific experience of the brightest absorbing *prema* contrasted against the black background of previous material existence characterized by abject forgetfulness of the Lord. The *nitya-siddha-jīvas* as well as Kṛṣṇa's divine *svarūpa-śakti-tattva* counterparts, and even Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, being always transcendentally situated and ever free from the influence of the modes of material nature, can never have such an extremely enhanced contrastive experience of the extent of the Lord's compassion. Only the emancipated *jīva* fully evolved to the acme of individually achievable transcendency can most perfectly empathize with the plight of the conditioned soul. And only such a thoroughly unfettered devotee, having perfectly completed the progressive course of *vraja-bhakti-bhajana*, can bring about in Kṛṣṇa an enhanced appreciation of His own golden quality of benevolence – an appreciation otherwise unfeasible in the spiritual world. It is only the emancipated *jīva*, therefore, who truly realizes what bliss is in store for the conditioned soul upon achieving ultimate perfection, and as such, the emancipated *jīva* is the fittest to instrumentally deliver the fallen souls to their highest end. Having the fully actuated *sac-cid-ānanda-siddha-deha*, the emancipated *jīva* remains ever beyond the degrading influence of the modes of material nature. He or she may, therefore, remain perpetually within the material world if required for assisting the Lord's preaching mission, apparently descending to the second-class or *madhyama-adhikārī* devotional status without running the risk of falling down to the material platform. Every disciple wants Guruji to be such a fully empowered *parama-mahā-bhāgavata-avatāra*, coming down from the spiritual world to deliver discipleji to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. We will have the rest of eternity to collect the thousands and millions of disciples, if that's what Kṛṣṇa wants. Not that we push the panic button, childishly play makeshift lifeguard *guru* jumping into the ocean of material existence to "save" the "drowning" souls, become overwhelmed by the tidal wave of *māyā*, and heroically get ourselves drowned in the process.

It's nice that we in all our spiritual infantility intelligently rely on the power of our *guru's* fully self-realized purports in the matter of assisting his preaching mission through the solid medium of transcendental book distribution. That is, no doubt, a tremendous credit. In the end, however, it would surely be preposterous to expect the books to be fully Kṛṣṇa conscious for us, wouldn't it? Transcendental book distribution certainly serves to puissantly inculcate ideal spiritual standards upon humanity. That is the mercy of the *ācārya-paramparā* – to give us some meaningful engagement along the way. Nevertheless, we should not idiotically ignore the obvious implication that it is we who have to personally learn and gradually realize the full gamut of progressive pure devotional experience. This must necessarily be accomplished by the practical application of appropriate, authoritatively approved internal *rūpānuga* methodologies, notably illustrated in the writings of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartipāda. The point is that practically every one of us at some juncture was on the receiving end of the book distribution effort. "Book distribution effort" means that the books were distributed to someone, and we happened to be the "someones" to whom the books were distributed. Why were the books distributed to us? The idea should be that the books were distributed to us to induce us to go to the highest end of realizing our eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa in one of the *vraja-bhāvas*. Unless and until we actually go to that end, the purpose of the book distribution that was done to enable us to receive the book won't be perfectly fulfilled. Therefore we have to go to that end to make the book distribution effort a complete success. An intelligent and thoughtful book distributor should sincerely consider, understand, appreciate, and in due course apply this principle in practical life. Otherwise, what is the meaning of the whole affair? How can we deem our transcendental book distribution a complete success unless the "someones" become fully absorbed in relishing the *vraja-bhāvas* as a result of having gained an attraction and greed for them by deeply imbibing the *śāstras'* essential message?

The "Someones" – Who? – The we "someones." "Work now; *samādhi* later." That's all right. But what work – and how much later? How later does later have to be before later can be considered later enough? Later after some future God-knows how many births?

Restoration of one's constitutional topmost *vraja-prema*-saturated quality of *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī* compassion toward others, following in the wake of the immaculate moods of the *gopas* and *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana, and achievement of full-blown self realization in terms of the *jīva's* highest potential are in effect one substance. *Prema* and compassion are essentially tantamount in that *prema* deliberately expresses itself as the service endeavor to facilitate the happiness and relieve the distress of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, not excluding the fallen potential devotees of this prison world of threefold suffering. Particularly in the higher *vraja-rasas* – *śṛṅgāra*, *vātsalya*, and some varieties of *sakhya* – a natural, supramundane sense of superiority in relation to Kṛṣṇa as a lover, son, or friend may be noticed, wherein the devotee is seen to rightfully manifest *dayā-bhāva* (mercy) as a consequence of *karuṇā* (pathos) toward the Lord. Such occurs in response to suitable *uddīpanas* (stimuli) due to the intoxicating nature of intensified *rati* for the *viṣaya-ālambana* (object of affection), which naturally covers a *rāga-bhakta's* knowledge of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's omnipotence. This is not very astonishing. As the highest features of *prema* exhibited in the stages of *sneha*, *māna*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva*, and *mahā-bhāva* are unachievable in the present physical body (*sādhaka-deha*), it is no laughing matter that one should progressively attend to the internal culture of the moods of Vraja, for without doing so, one could never hope to manifest the suitable eternal spiritual body (*siddha-deha*) essentially required for *prema's* maximum expression. Actually, the highest *premika* compassion evincible by any *jīva* can only be gained in the company of Kṛṣṇa's eternal retinue after joining His manifest earthly *līlās* in this material world. When that degree of *prema* brims over to compassionately inundate

the rotting lives of this prison world's doleful denizens, then only can topmost empowered preaching be done by anyone. As such, it would behoove any aspiring preacher who wants to realize his or her highest preaching potential to go to that end, even if it demands a concentrated, purposeful dedication of considerable time and energy in this lifetime to preparatory *antaraṅga-bhajana* with that long-term aim in view.

Greed-impelled multi-aspected absorption in *ānanda-maya-vraja-bhakti-bhajana*, both internal and external, could never in its real light be discerned by a deepest intellect to be a selfish or self-centered affair. It should never be confounded with the egoistical approach of the Himalayan forest-dwelling liberationist referred to by Prahlāda in his prayers to Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, as recounted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. If it were, it could hardly be accepted as *vraja-bhakti*, because by definition, at its very core, the exclusively selfless, self-giving service attitude, far above petty concerns for mitigating personal pangs of material bondage or for private spiritual satisfaction, is meticulously cultured for the absolute pleasures of the Lord and His devotees. *Lālasāmayī*, the intense desire for being reinstated in one's eternal, constitutional, perfect spiritual body (*siddha-deha*) as an eternal resident of Vraja, should in no way be presupposed by anyone to be any sort of gross or subtle material or spiritual sense gratification. A surrendered devotee harbors no ambition separate from the interest of the Lord. Such a devotee's only business is to recognize and sensibly submit to Kṛṣṇa's desire to have us back with Him – to serve Him, play with Him, and dance with Him in the eternal sky of Kṛṣṇaloka. In as much as it honors the Lord's wishes, a sincere *sādhaka* will nobly do the needful, pursuing the favorable internal cultivation by which His desire may ever be fulfilled. Not to do so would be utter conceit. This attainment of the Lord's *nitya-līlās* at Vraja-bhūmi and onward to Goloka is coveted only for the purpose of achieving the otherwise unachievable highest expressible form of pleasure-giving *prema*.

A true Vrajavāsī does not consider personal happiness and distress independent of Theirs (Rādha-Kṛṣṇa's) to be in any way a compelling factor for his or her actions. That is the speciality of the Vrajavāsīs' standard of devotion, which distinguishes their excellence, far surpassing that of the best devotees of any other realm. Although in *vraja-bhakti* liberation and beatific delight are naturally consequential, as in any other pure devotional approach, they could never be seen as crucial elements in a Vrajavāsī's decision-making process, though they should not necessarily be altogether eschewed or despised.

To say that the genuine, pure-hearted *vraja-bhakti-bhajanānandī* is selfishly bent on his own bliss, personal benefit, or comfort zone would be akin to declaring that the *goṣṭhy-ānandī* preacher is primarily engaged as such to secure for himself either the spiritual beatitude; the ego-gratifying *dakṣiṇā,* honor, and reputation; or the sheer adventure personally plundered from his burlesque preaching extravaganzas. One might exhaustively harp and harp about the hypocritical, cheap, imitative imposters of either ilk, but that should never ascribe any improbity to the truly sincere. Negation of the nonessential in no way suggests a need to negate the essential. In either authentic case, we should be prepared to acknowledge the primary focus on the actual sincere service endeavor as distinct from its pleasurable or remunerative side effects – "eating to live" as opposed to "living to eat."

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in Her inimitable Kṛṣṇa conscious absorption transcendentally experiences more distress than the combined distresses of all the conditioned souls of the entire material existence put together. Although Her "distresses" are transcendental and *ānanda-maya*, as opposed to the niggardly nature of a *baddha-jīva's* suffering, they are nonetheless very real and unimaginably excruciating. In truth, Her anxieties over the condition of the incarcerated *baddha-jīvas*, as represented in the lamentations of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to Ṭhākura Haridāsa,

constitute but a minor feature of Her complete whole domain of loving afflictions. It is of little wonder that a soft-hearted *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī* devotee, upon knowing these things, might opt to compassionately seek in various ways to somehow help mitigate Her severe amorous excruciations. How could we conceive that such an attempt to assist in the services of Her preponderant internal "home" affairs is in any way less noble than the attempt to alleviate the relatively insignificant sufferings of the minute individuals of this world? If anything, the consideration of the magnitude of necessity pertaining to the primary plight of Rādhā all the more amplifies the reason to laud the internal affairs of those enlightened individuals seriously endeavoring to qualify themselves to become Rādhā's *pālya-dāsīs* through strenuous *antaraṅga-bhakti-bhajana*. They are neither in the least *bhukti-kāmī* nor *mukti-kāmī* nor *svānanda-kāmī*.

In any case, neither the genuinely pure-hearted *goṣṭhy-ānandīs* nor the bona fide, high-minded, internally inclined *bhajanānandīs* ever purposefully act for their egocentric personal benefit. Their only aim is to make others happy – for Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction ultimately, which is the very basis of their own fulfillment. By the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa through any program of loving service, the entire creation is benefited, in the same way that by watering the root of a tree, all leaves, flowers, and fruits are automatically nourished. The presence of merely one pure devotee of either standing in this world can sustain the entire planet. However, for a *sādhaka*, particularly in Kali-yuga, no sort of internal *bhajana* or *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-mānasa-sevā* can ever secure the superlative result without the practitioner at regular intervals functioning to help uplift the populace by loudly broadcasting the *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Names of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. After all, *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* does happen to be the *yuga-dharma* for this current age. It is seen that although certainly situated as topmost *paramahaṁsa-bhajanānandīs*, the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana,

headed by Śrī Rūpa, faultlessly epitomized this principle both by their regular performance of *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* and by their efforts to elucidate the principles of *vraja-bhakti-bhajana* in their many writings that have effectively served to propagate the truths about unalloyed devotion down through the generations. Indeed, one would do well to notice that though the Gosvāmīs always absorbed themselves internally in the search for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa through feelings of separation (*viraha-bhajana*) and in fact did not actually distinguish themselves as *goṣṭhy-ānandī* itinerant preachers, still, they externally benedicted the people of this world by the fruits of their resolute *ānanda-maya-bhajana*. The incomparable, unswerving life of concentrated *bhajana* fortitude exemplified by the Gosvāmīs and their followers in and of itself stands ever monumental in the hearts of the *anurāgī* Vaiṣṇavas and perennially serves as a pre-eminent paragon for the world at large, conspicuously expressing the greatest good to all faithful aspirants on the path of inwardly progressive *antaraṅga-bhakti-bhajana* for all time to come.

Ultimately, both real *bhajanānanda* and real *goṣṭhy-ānanda* spontaneously spring from the *ānanda-maya* platform under the influence of the Lord's *hlādinī-śakti* or *svarūpa-śakti*, as per the evolvement of *bhāva* and *prema* when one transcends the influence of the three modes of material nature. Anything short of that, however boastful, could hardly be more than a semblance of the real thing with relatively little efficacy on any front. Hence, a consummate *goṣṭhy-ānandī* of any stature always stands on the solid underpinnings of advanced internal *bhajana*. Moreover, the transcendentally situated *niṣkiñcana ānanda-maya-bhajana-kārī*, even though veiling himself from the worldly purview, ever enhances the world by dint of his very presence in all purity.

Innumerable neophyte "preachers" out on the most congested streets of the most important cities in the world, clangorously bellowing the semblance of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* either on the

offensive stage (*pratibimba-nāmābhāsa*) or the clearing stage (*chāyā-nāmābhāsa*), could hardly accomplish for the spiritual welfare of the conditioned souls what could be achieved by the lips of even one reclusive forest-dwelling *śuddha-nāma-bhajanānandī*. Admittedly, *aparādhā-nāma* can offer the putrid fruit of karmic sense gratification (*bhukti*) within the cycle of repeated birth and death. *Chāyā-nāmābhāsa* can also at best free the heart from material contamination (*anartha-nivṛtti*), augmenting one's chances for liberation from material existence (*mukti*), up to granting residence in Vaikuṇṭha-loka. Even so, neither *aparādhā-nāma* nor *ābhāsa-nāma* chanted by the millions could ever in a billion years impregnate the heart of anyone with *śuddha-bhakti-śakti*, enkindling the *jīva's* dormant *vraja-prema*, as would a single recitation of *śuddha-nāma*.

Nāma-aparādhīs, who generally favor the *bhogya-darśana* of Śrī Guru, are more or less parasites within the institutional "body" of the spiritual master. They have not actually evolved to the status of spiritually functional constituents. Though donning *kaṇṭhī-mālā* and Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*, worshiping the deity, professing loyalty to Śrī Guru, paying lip-service to the philosophy of full surrender, holding lofty ecclesial or priestly positions, and having ample opportunity for spiritually elevating *sādhu-saṅga,* they in fact remorselessly behave rather like *kali-celas* or *kaitava-bhaktas* (typically categorized as *pratibimba-bhaktābhāsa*), with little scope for much tangible spiritual advancement on account of their unrelenting gross and subtle exploitative tendencies. Indeed, their fanfare of devotional fervor may be comparable, at best, to cracking nuts with a *śālagrāma-śilā*.

Individuals who have yet to surpass the stage of chanting *chāyā-nāmābhāsa,* even though earnestly struggling to clear away offenses against the Holy Name along with their concomitant repercussions, are comparable to the shadow of a devotee (*chāyā-bhaktābhāsa*) or *bhakta-prāya,* the mere likeness of a devotee.

The *chāyā-bhaktas*, though potentially nearing the threshold of pure devotion, are not thus far to be accepted as pure devotees in the true sense. Though affiliated with *sampradāyic* society through *bhāgavata* or *pāñcarātrika* initiation and having recourse to graceful, spiritually powerful *sādhu-saṅga* and pure devotional scriptures, all such said unqualified neophytes could have, at best, but a semblance of *śuddha-bhakti*. Quite often, due to imprecise perception, unwarranted attachment to narrow comprehension of the *ācārya's* instructions, confusion, or sheer juvenile speculative notions about what they imagine to be the reality of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they disastrously obscure, adulterate, or even obliterate the essential substance of spiritual life. Espousing rampant, wide-ranging institutionally integrated erroneous dogmas while clinging to barely-understood institutionalized ritualistic formulas and formalities, they in due course imprudently project or spread a relatively distorted semblance of the pure devotional atmosphere upon the milieu of a bona fide spiritual establishment. Thus generating a vitiated semblance of the *ācārya's sampradāya*, such unskillful persons knowingly or unknowingly form a virtual impasse for those inadequately acquainted with the Gauḍīya *siddhānta*, fatefully hindering the latter's hopes of gaining even a glimpse of what would truly constitute ultimate *pāramārthika* attainment.

Although anyone chanting *nāmābhāsa* on any level is certainly far superior to anyone who has never once uttered the alphabetical semblance of *hari-nāma*, only one who chants *śuddha-nāma* is a *śuddha-bhakta* in the real sense. And the simple truth is that only a *śuddha-bhakta*, whether *goṣṭhy-ānandī* or *bhajanānandī*, can do much substantial good for anyone. Without chanting *śuddha-nāma*, who can honestly claim to be having *nāma-ruci*? Without chanting *śuddha-nāma*, who can responsibly claim to be doing any kind of empowered *jīva-daya*? Without chanting *śuddha-nāma*, who can sensibly claim that *vaiṣṇava-seva* has been truly accomplished? Without chanting *śuddha-nāma*, what fool falsely claims to be doing any kind of tangibly progressive *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-mānasa-sevā*?

Furthermore, one might consider this point: those who are actually *paṇḍita* or learned in all the scriptural conclusions see all living entities with equal vision. One who loves Kṛṣṇa loves everyone – cares for everyone – not only humans. Mahāprabhu, Lord Gaurāṅga, expressed this when He asked Ṭhākura Haridāsa about the deliverance of earless beings like snakes, trees, and stones. There are innumerable microbes floating in just one cubic inch of air. There would naturally be so many trees, creepers, insects, lizards, rodents, birds, and other creatures within or around our *śuddha-nāma bhajanānandī*'s *bhajana-kuṭīra* – how many souls would be residing within his very body? The extent to which these countless souls would benefit by circumstantially associating with his pure-hearted supplication of *śuddha-nāma* would be inestimable. The contextual implication would be that if we were to generously extend the concept of *goṣṭhī* (family) to those other than human beings, then it would not be wrong to also consider the genuinely pure-hearted *bhajanānandī* a *goṣṭhy-ānandī*. He at least inadvertently, if not consciously, does the highest good to the greater "family" within his sphere of influence by instrumentally serving to prompt the advent of Śrī Hari-nāma Prabhu, who mercifully dances within his heart, on his tongue, and in the atmosphere about him. Any sound vibration produced anywhere on this planet is believed to encircle the Earth seven times before dissolution. This makes it possible for his chanting to purify the ethereal atmosphere of the whole world. The result would be all the more powerful if he would be living in Vṛndāvana, where the purificatory benefits mount a thousand fold. No man is an island.

From another perspective, it may be inferred that even though the *nirjana-bhajanānandī* outwardly appears to take the *nirjana* position, apparently neglecting to expand the "family" of devotees in this dimension, he could hardly be *nirjana* in the absolute sense in that he, in the course of his inner-dimensional

absorption, remains ever associated with the constituent *vraja-jana* members of Kṛṣṇa's eternal "family" through the agency of *mānasa-sevā*. He is never actually really alone. Because he selflessly serves to favorably expand the bliss (*ānanda*) of Kṛṣṇa's "family" (*goṣṭhī*) of eternal associates, he may surely, in the fullest sense, also be honored as *goṣṭhy-ānandī*. The purport is that until one at least approaches the stage of realizing one's eternal *ānanda-maya* relationship with the Supreme Absolute Reality in one of the five primary transcendental *vraja-rasas*, no one should out of envy, spite, or feelings of superiority toward others proudly or self-righteously proclaim oneself to be either *goṣṭhy-ānandī* or *bhajanānandī*, much less dare to denounce one or the other on the basis of perverse lopsided religio-institutional bias or immature, subjectively predisposed shallow superstition. It is better, as a matter of common decency, to humbly try to chant the Holy Name with all self-effacement while endeavoring to progressively qualify oneself to unobtrusively assist the Lord and His devotees in whatever small way possible, as inspired by one's indwelling monitor *guru* and confirmed by His various external representatives.

Bearing all this in mind, it might be argued from one angle or another that the only major consideration in this connection is the satisfaction of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa – that if preaching, primarily through the medium of transcendental book distribution, is what satisfies them, then one need not look beyond the vigorous execution of that activity alone to achieve ultimate transcendence. Then again, it might be argued that if one is engaged in the activity of transcendental book distribution, one <u>is</u> Kṛṣṇa conscious. Okay, fine. However, one might perspicaciously ask, "How Kṛṣṇa conscious?" How "Kṛṣṇa conscious" does "Kṛṣṇa conscious" have to be before "Kṛṣṇa conscious" could be considered "Kṛṣṇa conscious" enough to be fully "Kṛṣṇa conscious"? To what extent could a new *bhakta* be perfectly "Kṛṣṇa conscious"? It is declared that anyone who follows the four disciplinary restraints – no illicit sex, no

intoxication, no meat-eating, and no gambling – and chants a minimum of sixteen rounds of *hari-nāma-japa* daily is qualified to make disciples all over the world. Yahoo! Fantastic! So then, if it is just a matter of outward animation, new *bhaktas* also follow the four regulative principles and chant a minimum of sixteen rounds without even having been duly initiated. Even robots can do that! Maybe they should also be allowed to initiate disciples all over the world. Why only the institutionally rubber-stamped "*gurus*"? Robots could also be programmed to distribute books, or offer *ārātrikas*, or clang a pair of *karatālas* for that matter. Here, let us again probe a crucial question – Is it what we do (form), or is it the plane of consciousness backing whatever we do (substance), that is ultimately noteworthy and consequential?

We would do well to remember that neither *guru* nor Kṛṣṇa really need our *patrams* (leaves) or *puṣpams* (flowers). They are pleased by *bhakti* alone. And just as *bhakti* is realized by degrees, so also is *guru's* satisfaction, which is an evolvable thing, answering to the quality of Kṛṣṇa consciousness more so than to the quantified outward display of "devotional service." Though apparently aroused by the disciple's external actions, *guru's* pleasure, marked by profuse blessings for further progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, must indeed be based upon the qualitative dynamics of the disciple's internal service attitude to be real, solid, and spiritually legitimate. In fact, it may be reasonably established that the resolute desperation to discover the details of one's internal constitutional identity as an eternal resident of Vraja in and of itself affirms the initial sign of Śrī Guru's profound benedictions upon a disciple. If such ardent solicitude is lacking, one might do well to wonder to what extent Śrī Guru's satisfaction has actually been invoked.

Some less-than-philosophically-astute individuals attempt to purposefully popularize as institutional dogma a fallacious proposition that by externally serving Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement in *vaidhī bhakti* alone one will automatically

pop up somehow or other in *vraja-līlā* after the end of the present life – an unverifiable post-dated check. They insist that one need not currently concern oneself in the least with the cultivation of any internal program of *rāgānuga-sādhana*. "Just blindly put your duty-bound nose to the *vaidhī bhakti* grindstone. Don't think; just do! *Mā śucaḥ*!" This sort of crafty conclusion, manipulatively framed to camouflage the spiritual inadequacies or incompetence of a movement's post-founder embryonic leadership, may serve to conveniently dodge or altogether evade deeper queries about the much-anticipated here-and-now practical application of esoteric Rūpānuga Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism – at least temporarily. But it hardly does justice to the subject; moreover, it commits a manner of violence against the progressive quest of a sincere candidate who perhaps actually deserves promotion to higher-level, internal Kṛṣṇa conscious pursuits.

At a cursory glance, frequently adduced passages from Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī's *Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta* and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya* may appear to allude to this erroneous impression. However, these statements could never persuade anyone who has ventured to seriously scrutinize the various scriptural texts and commentaries of the Six Gosvāmīs and their followers to subscribe to such idiocy. The correct conception is quite the sound of a different drummer and also not so unmelodious. It is said in *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* that *yathā yathā gaura-padāravinde . . .* – "to whatever extent a pious person becomes devoted to the lotus feet of Lord Gaura, to that extent the flood of the nectar of Rādhā's lotus feet spontaneously arises in his heart." The word "extent" is crucial here. Similarly discussed is the matter of attaining the service of Kṛṣṇa in all primary *rasas*, through the preliminary worship of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu in *dāsya-bhāva*. Here, the word *dāsya-bhāva* in relation to the service of Mahāprabhu certainly does not connote reverential servitude in terms of the *vaidhī bhakti* format,

any more than it would when used to denote the *rasa* of servitude to Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Rather, particularly for those souls who have the innate capacity for the conjugal *rasa*, the word *dāsya-bhāva* should serve only to indicate one's spontaneous attitude of loving service to the merciful Rādhā aspect of Gaura's personality. Serving Lord Caitanya in *dāsya-bhāva* becomes tantamount to serving Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in *dāsī-bhāva* (*rādhā-dāsya*).

Generally, in the Rūpānuga tradition, one is advised to dive deep into the ocean of service to Lord Gaurāṅga's Navadvīpa *līlās,* internally conceiving oneself to be a *kiśora-brāhmaṇa* who, as a servant of the servant (*dāsānudāsa*) of Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, accordingly assists to augment Mahāprabhu's relishment of various *vraja-bhāvas*. In doing so, one transitionally surfaces in the nectarous ocean of Rādhā's *mādhurya-līlās* as a blissful *kiśorī-gopī* maidservant of the maidservant (*dāsy-anudāsī*) of Śrīmatī Lalitā Devī within the group of Rādhā's *sakhīs* in the land of Vraja. One then blissfully resurfaces in the ocean of *gaura-premāmṛta* with redoubled inspiration and depth of *rādhā-rasa-bhāvita* insight. The Rūpānuga approach to *gaura-līlā* and *kṛṣṇa-līlā* is not the dull-headed affair of the *prākṛta-bhaktas*. Indeed, a conscientious internal culture of *bhāvas* is most certainly required – a culture above and beyond though not necessarily exclusive of the external apparently *vaidhika* program of missionary duties. With this in mind, the basic unconditional service attitude practiced at the very onset of a novice's humble surrender to the *ācārya's* external missionary training program may be easily adapted and internally applied at a more mature stage to fittingly promote the true, cognitive, esoteric evolvement of one's eternal constitutional *bhāva-deha* or *vraja-svarūpa*.

When Gaura's mercy will flood the heart with an aspiration to serve Rādhā's *vraja-līlās*, one will come to appreciate the value of service to the lotus feet of Lord Nityānanda. Just as Gaurāṅga inclusively embodies the *bhāvas* of Kṛṣṇa's foremost *svarūpa-śakti* counterpart, Śrī Rādhā, so also, Nityānanda Rāma inclusively embodies the foremost *baladeva-svarūpa-śakti-tattva* who appears

in Vraja as the younger sister of Rādhārāṇī, Śrīmatī Anaṅga Mañjarī. Balarāma's Kali-yuga *avatāra*, Nityānanda, is markedly more than Baladeva Himself in that He, unlike Balarāma, can, by adopting Anaṅga Mañjarī's *bhāva*, directly relish the internal mood of loving service to the lotus feet of Rādhā, in the *mādhurya-rasa* parallel to Gaura's relishment of *rādhā-bhāva*. As previously mentioned, Kṛṣṇa and His supreme *svarūpa-śakti* counterpart, Śrī Rādhā, though morphologically differentiated, are ontologically one. So also is the case with Baladeva and His topmost *svarūpa-śakti* expansion, Anaṅga Mañjarī, from whom Balarāma's own personal consorts such as Vāruṇī and Revatī expand. All the members of Kṛṣṇa's family, including Balarāma, possess the deepest regard, affection, and love for the sweetest, most eminently love-worthy Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Yet, owing to certain social constraints, Balarāma, as Kṛṣṇa's older brother, is practically dispossessed of any opportunity to directly express His love for Her. So, to fulfill His most confidential desire to serve Rādhā's lotus feet, He accepts an expanded feminine form as Her younger sister. Still He Himself, in His masculine Baladeva *svarūpa*, is unable to directly relish the experience of being in the position of His *śakti-tattva* expansion, just as Kṛṣṇa is unable to directly relish the moods of Rādhā. He, therefore, in *gaura-līlā*, accepts the *bhāva* and complexion of His supreme self-same *svarūpa-śakti* counterpart to experience that which was transcendentally impossible in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Thus Balarāma manifests the form of Nityānanda Rāma in the same way that Kṛṣṇa dons His Gaura *svarūpa* to savor the ultimate loving disposition of Rādhā in *vipralambha-mahā-bhāva*. As Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are one, so, similarly, Rādhā and Anaṅga Mañjarī are one. In fact, Anaṅga Mañjarī is celebrated as a veritable second Rādhā. Yet, by the will of Balarāma, she acts as *dāsy-anudāsī* in the capacity of a *prāṇa-sakhī* (*upa-mañjarī* of Lalitā-sakhī) in the service of Rādhārāṇī, just as Balarāma Himself functions as servitor Godhead to assist *svayaṁ-rūpa* Kṛṣṇa in various ways. Balarāma as

servitor Godhead is *ādi-guru* in the *vātsalya, sakhya,* and *dāsya rasas*. Similarly, Balarāma's expanded *mādhurya-svarūpa*, Anaṅga Mañjarī, is the *mādhurya-rasa ādi-guru*, who most compassionately acts as the liaison linking the *jīvas* with the confidential services of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Her position as Rādhārāṇī's younger sister greatly facilitates this role. This is a hint as to the import of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Thakura's statement *heno nitāi bine bhāi, rādhā-kṛṣṇa pāite nāi*. Indeed, it is only by Nitāi's boundless mercy upon the most fallen conditioned souls that the *vraja-gopīs*' superexcellent spontaneous devotional *bhāvas* have been made readily accessible to the whole world. Just as Anaṅga Mañjarī is the special mercy manifestation of Rādhā, so Nityānanda (in the mood of Anaṅga Mañjarī) is the special mercy manifestation of Gaura (in the mood of Rādhā). By Nitai's special causeless mercy, one becomes free from material attraction, attains the land of Vraja, and finds shelter at the lotus feet of the Six Gosvāmīs headed by Śrī Rūpa. By seriously acquainting oneself with the writings of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana and their authorized representatives, one accesses the truths concerning *parakīya-rasa-maya* Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the appropriate *bhajana-kriyā* required for attaining Their eternal relationship on the path of spontaneous loving devotion.

Mere rudimentary *vaidhika* devotion to the feet of Lord Caitanya can hardly evoke a highly evolved nectar-flood of Rādhā's direct influence upon anyone. "Extent," as applied to the principle of *gaura-bhakti*, refers to the degree of internal devotional qualification in one's approach far more than to any externally quantifiable mass of regulative devotional practice. The factual proof that the nectar of Rādhā's lotus feet is extensively flooding one's heart will be seen in one's attentiveness to deeply understand and practically pursue the path of *vraja-bhakti-bhajana*. Either *sambandhānuga-bhakti* (*dāsya, sakhya*, or *vātsalya-bhajana*) or *kāmānuga-bhakti* (*mādhurya-bhajana*) will be practiced under the guidance of the Gosvāmīs according to one's progressively perceivable natural

internal inclination or aptitude for a particular mellow of loving service to divinity. The edict *sevā sādhaka-rūpeṇa siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi / tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā vraja-lokānusārataḥ* mentioned in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* truly for all time applies both externally and internally to *sādhakas* who have yet to transcend material bondage as well as to *siddhas* who are *jāta-rati* Vaiṣṇavas having attained the perfect realization of *sthāyi-bhāva*, or constant devotional ecstasy. There is no broadly applicable streamlined institutional lame way out. No founding *ācārya* of any Kṛṣṇa conscious establishment ever casuistically instructed in such a way so as to shrink from the responsibility of deliberately enhancing or nourishing the deserving disciple's progress onto the path of beatified *vraja-bhakti-bhajana*.

When purposefully prescribed to forcibly inculcate the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, *vaidhī bhakti* certainly functions to coercively rehabilitate a conditioned soul's misdirected or unconstitutional *rāga* (attraction) or *āsakti* (attachment) to worldly objects of material sense gratification, by obliging one to focus upon Kṛṣṇa-ized sense objects. This is, no doubt, a step in the right direction, and in the beginning it is actually required. If, however, one does not intelligently endeavor in the present life to surpass the rudimentary stage of obligatory, reverential devotion rigidly constrained by scriptural regulations and embark upon the path of spontaneous, internal *rāgānuga* attraction (*parā bhakti*), one will almost invariably remain a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* or *prākṛta-bhakta*, moored to the modes of material nature. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. At best, one may come to the platform of *aiśvarya-jñāna-mayī bhakti*, gaining fitness for *mahīmā-jñāna-yukta-prema*. This type of *bhakti*, contaminated with knowledge of the Lord's supremacy, leads to the spiritually conditional realm of Vaikuṇṭha-loka or to the majestic Vaikuṇṭha-vṛndāvana on Kṛṣṇaloka, where the *aiśvarya-līlās* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the mood of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa are served in awe and veneration,

as clearly discussed by Viśvanāth Chakravartipāda in his commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.303), or, at most, to the opulent realm of Dvārakā.

vraja-lokera bhāve yei karaye bhajana
sei jana pāya vraje vrajendra-nandana.

"One who worships the Lord by following in the footsteps of the inhabitants of Vraja-bhūmi attains Him in the transcendental planet of Vraja, where He is known as the son of Mahārāja Nanda." (*Cc. Madhya* 9.131)

All bona fide Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* agree that the *mādhurya-līlās* of Vraja can only be attained by ascending to the terrace of *kevala-mādhurya-prema* via the path of *rāga-bhakti* under the merciful guidance of an emissary of Vraja-dhāma. Furthermore, it is clearly declared by Kavirāja Gosvāmī in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, with reference to the appearance of Vrajendranandana Śyāma, that *rāga-mārga bhakti loke karite pracaraṇa. Pracaraṇa* means to propagate, to make the super-excellence of the path of *rāga-bhakti* known to the conditioned souls of this world. Unless one is exposed to the vibrant, esoteric transcendentally erotic principles of the spiritually constituted damsels of Vraja, which surpass all considerations of mundane morality, one can hardly expect to clearly construe the lie of its lustful perversion projected upon the illusive material panorama. It is imperative that the preachers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness become solidly acquainted with the truths regarding the propriety of the sublime pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa so as to powerfully eradicate the misgivings concerning these affairs abounding among scholars, theologians, and the general populace. It is not enough to unconvincingly cower behind a glib formula that denounces any open discussion of the matter before the unconversant. Taboo, prudery, and timidity concerning the enlightened free propagation of the correct conception of the thing have only paved the way for rampant misconception amid

those victimized by the vigorous, widespread propaganda of the Māyāvādī impersonalists, Sahajiyās, professional preachers of the *Bhāgavata*, and other such demonic elements waylaying an already darkened contemporary world view devoid of properly developed personal understanding of the Absolute. Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya purposefully preached his concocted illusionist philosophy of impersonal monism with the intention to create within the minds of the people in general an aversion to the proposition of a tasteless impersonal outcome of religious life. In this way he indirectly promoted irreligion in the form of materially "tasteful" lawless sexual indulgence, the result of which would be a profuse influx of low-life progeniture (*varṇa-saṅkara*) upon the face of the Earth. His mission was simply to preface the descent of Lord Gaurāṅga by kindly giving the most condemned conditioned souls a chance to gain the highest good upon encountering the *saṅkīrtana* movement with the Lord's maximum munificence in view. Unless the preachers of the Rūpānuga-sampradāya systematically and forcefully present the topmost personal conception of God as the supreme lover, the ultimate purpose of Śaṅkarācārya's undertaking will not be fulfilled. Moreover, people will not have the opportunity to clearly see an all-attractive *raso vai saḥ* alternative to the relatively tasteless Brahman conception of spirituality, without which they could hardly have much impetus to abandon the quest for *rasa* on the mundane plane. Knowledge of the true nature of the original spiritual mellow of conjugal love as the ultimate cause of its dull, shadow-like material reflection effectively alleviates the problem of mundane affinity by the power of superior magnetism. Scientific exposition of the highest *mādhurya* aspect of the Personality of Godhead will naturally preclude all philosophical aberrations thereof to benefit the open-minded. Offenders, determined to deny the authoritative persuasion of the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, will go to hell anyway of their own accord. What can be done? We should not be overly concerned about that.

aiśvarya-jñānete saba jagat miśrita
aiśvarya-śithila-preme nāhi mora prīta

"Knowing My opulences, the whole world looks upon Me with awe and veneration. But devotion made feeble by such reverence does not attract Me." (*Cc. Ādi* 3.16)

aiśvarya-jñāne vidhi-bhajana kariyā
vaikuṇṭhake yāya catur-vidha mukti pāñā

"By performing such regulated devotional service in awe and veneration, one may go to Vaikuṇṭha and attain the four kinds of liberation." (*Cc. Ādi* 3.17)

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa desired to appear in this world at the very end of Dvāpara-yuga for two reasons – to personally taste the quintessential mellows of love of God (*prema-rasa-niryāsa*) and, beyond that, to purposely propagate the process of *rāga-mārga-bhakti* in the world. In doing so, He would herald the highest good to the most fallen people of this Age of Kali, who would get the opportunity to learn of His enchanting *vraja-līlās* from the scriptural accounts of His earthly pastimes. Kṛṣṇa, as *līlā-puruṣottama*, tasted *prema-rasa* from the standpoint of the *viṣaya-vigraha*, the supreme enjoyer and object of *prema*. Being relatively unimpressed by reverential devotion, He deliberately revealed the beauty and sweetness of the Vrajavāsīs' purest love for Him to the world by practically evincing that love in the course of His manifest pastimes. Yet, until His advent as Lord Caitanya, His purposes remained largely unfulfilled. Retrospectively, it appears that *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, in fact, simply paved the way for the Supreme Lord's appearance as Lord Caitanya who, for the most part, merely expanded upon and, in His own way, dynamically reinforced the two original (internal and external) objectives of Kṛṣṇa. By tasting *prema-rasa* from the standpoint of the *āśraya-vigraha*, Śrī Rādhā – the resplendent abode of the highest *prema*, whose relishment is ten million times greater than that of Her

beloved – Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as *prema-puruṣottama*, became increasingly moved to compassionately distribute *vraja-prema* in an unprecedented and unparalleled way. In fact, as detailed throughout the Gosvāmīs' writings, He heartily preferred to bestow that most succulent, mysterious *prema* that follows in the wake of Rādhā's matchless expressions of *mahā-bhāva* (*samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasāṁ sva-bhakti-śriyam*). In this way, Mahāprabhu abundantly fulfilled what remained unfulfilled in Kṛṣṇa's attempt, by powerfully preaching the process of unalloyed devotion as He demonstratively practiced it Himself. If Lord Kṛṣṇa desired to propagate *rāga-mārga bhakti* in the world by way of exhibiting His *madhurya-līlās*, Lord Gaurāṅga, the self-same Lord Kṛṣṇa appearing in Kali-yuga as the most munificent devotee of Himself, desired it a thousandfold on the basis of His *audārya* disposition. That is precisely what distinguishes Him as the *mahā-vadanyāvatāra*. Kindly bear in mind that the Lord's aim to propagate the *vraja-bhāvas* is but an aspect of the external reason for His divine appearance, an aspect that was not meant to be kept hidden. In fact, it was to further this propagation work, that the Six Gosvāmīs and many of their contemporaries and followers took great pains to elaborately illustrate both the aforementioned gradual (external) and sophisticated esoteric (internal) methods of *rāga-mārga-bhajana* in their volumes of literature. Thus, scientifically expounding the principles of *vraja-bhakti*, they continue to perpetuate the greatest act of mercy upon the world's Kali-yuga populace down to the present day. That few would be chosen (qualified) does not imply that many should not be called. We, as living *vibhinnāṁśa jīvas*, are eternally parts and parcels of Lord Caitanya. Part and parcel means "partner." We are meant to act as partners in the "business" of the Lord, having the same shared interests at heart. Suffice to say, more mature "business partners" representing the Lord's *saṅkīrtana* movement should recognize the gravity of their assigned "business" responsibilities. Following in the Lord's footsteps, we should likewise personally pursue the

matchless mellows of love of Godhead (*vraja-prema*). Similarly, whenever and wherever possible, we should also purposefully preach *rāga-mārga-bhakti* in the world, showing the highest munificence to the fallen people of this Age of Kali. Mercifully spark the *lobha* or greed for the thing by facilitating an inspired regard for and attraction to the *Bhāgavata's* essential message, and then, in due course, help to diligently fan that spark of *lobha-maya-śraddhā* into a blazing fire of *rāga-mayī* spontaneity – not that we should beat about the bush, becloud the issue, sweep it under the rug, or altogether exterminate the thing. If out of devotional ineptitude, immaturity, oversight, deceitfulness, miserliness, or sheer ignorance, we were to grossly neglect or faithlessly sidestep the forward implementation of this prime, two-fold missionary objective, then how could we, in good conscience, deem ourselves compliant, competently instrumental, magnanimous agents of *guru* and Gaurāṅga's grace?

Deliberating upon the profoundest precepts of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya and the progressive navigation of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we might guardedly examine how a number of individuals in key ecclesiastico-administrative positions, due to either inexperience, imprudence, unadorned obtusity, neglect, or self-aggrandizing, perhaps even devious or diabolical intents, are, as a matter of fact, irresponsibly steering the society in a direction that may not so closely adhere to the lofty course intended by the *sampradāya's* founding *ācāryas*. So, fine! Let them do like that. Whatever nonsense they think to do, let them do it. Because in any case the flow of the *kevala-bhakti* cult, by the decree of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, will be *apratihatā*, unobstructed. It will not be checked by any faction's substandard, foolish, materially conceived, watered-down misrepresentation of the *saṅkīrtana* movement's fundamental principles. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu doesn't really need the help of any individual or any group of individuals to accomplish His missionary goals. They who are internally advanced enough to

precisely distinguish and wholly surrender to the influence of the Lord's divine loving network undoubtedly inherit the privilege of assisting Him as His authorized *sampradāyic* agents. If we don't act as His instruments to purely propagate the full gamut of essential teachings of the Rūpānuga tradition, it is not that no one will come forward to do the needful. Lord Kṛṣṇa instructed Arjuna, "Even if you do not fight, all the warriors assembled on this battlefield are already put to death by my arrangement. Therefore, relinquish your petty weakness of heart! Acting as My instrument, stand up and fight!" Similarly, Lord Caitanya has enjoined that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement be spread to every town and village throughout the world. And "spread" means to spread in terms of the afore-mentioned purpose for which the movement is actually meant – to raise people to the path of spontaneous loving devotion, principally by way of congregational chanting of the Holy Name – thus giving them the chance to evolve to the stages of *rāgānuga-bhāva* and *vraja-prema* in this lifetime, not after some future millions of births, who knows how far down the road. Mahāprabhu's purposes will certainly be fulfilled in some way or other by someone; do not think otherwise. It's just a question of who gets the credit.

Neither the territories nor the by-laws nor the treasuries, logos, or various other external accoutrements of an institution necessarily constitute the spiritual essence or *sampradāyic* spirit of the institution, any more than the body of an individual constitutes the soul of the individual. Just as an automobile is important in so far as the automobile serves the purposes of its owner, a spiritual institution can be considered important to the extent that it actually serves to further the spiritual objectives of the *sampradāya* it claims to represent. If the car breaks down or crashes, the owner may want to junk the thing and accept another more reliable conveyance. Often it is moralized that the spiritual master's institution is the "body" of the spiritual master.

But the body of the spiritual master may become diseased. If some part of the spiritual master's body becomes gangrenous, then it may become necessary to amputate that part of the body. In other words, the body may become at least partially if not wholly dysfunctional in the matter of serving the purposes of the spiritual master. That is not impossible. It is not that the body of the spiritual master, either in a healthy condition or in a diseased condition, is the spiritual master proper. The institution is his body, the printing press is the heart of that body, his magazine is the backbone of that body, his disciples are his bodily limbs, the collected hoards of money are that body's precious blood, the heaps and piles of resolutions upon resolutions may even be likened to constructs of the mind and intelligence, but what constitutes the consciousness, the essential supra-cognitive aspect of the *ācārya's* eternal spiritual existence? One might proffer that his consciousness is tantamount to his teachings, his personal ecstasies expressed in the purports of his books. Who would disagree? But then we should ask whether or not we have even begun to understand the most basic of those teachings – that we are not this body. The body of the spiritual master is not the eternal cognizant essence of the spiritual master proper. The spiritual master is not his body anymore than we are our bodies. To say that the spiritual master's institution is the body of the spiritual master does not imply that the spiritual master's institution is the quintessence of the spiritual master's existence. So the conclusion should be that the institutional "body" of the *ācārya* is not to be equated with the *ācārya's* cognitive, essential spirit – the eternal *sampradāyic* truths. Rather, the body is to be seen as merely the chariot of the soul. The institution is a body through which the realizations of the *sampradāyic* soul are to be expressed. Serving the *ācārya's* real self interest is not merely a bodily (institutional) affair; rather, we should progressively strive to recognize, embrace, uphold, and disseminate the tenets of his *sampradāya's* highest ideology, an ideology expected to be embodied by his institution.

From another angle, we may say that the body of the *ācārya* is factually identical with the *ācārya's* soul, at least in a qualitative sense, in that the *ācārya's* body is fully absorbed in *yajña*, sacrifice. *Bramārpaṇaṁ brahma havir, brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam/ brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ, brahma-karma-samādhinā* (*Bg.* 4.24). All things connected with the performance of sacrifice – the firewood, the fire, the ghee, the offered grains, the officiating priest, the performer of sacrifice, and the sacrifice itself – become merged in transcendence. They become one in purpose, one in quality, as constituents of Brahman via pure devotional *yajña* for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu. Things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. So in that sense the body of the spiritual master is respected on the same level as the spiritual master's soul. Even if his body becomes diseased or a portion of it becomes gangrenous, he may still remain fully determined to engage the body in acts of sacrifice. However, the spiritual master may observe that the disease of his body is such that it unremittingly obstructs the body's reasonable absorption in *yajña*, by which it could viably stand as a useful Brahman constituent of his existence, so much so that he may blamelessly opt to discard his body as useless for all practical purposes. If the body becomes in some way contemptuous toward the spiritual master's real pure devotional ideal, or if the body becomes contemptible in the eyes of the spiritual master, then what's the use of such a body? In other words, if the institutional "body" of the *ācārya* becomes deviated from its true purpose, in terms of the function intended by the *ācārya's sampradāyic* "soul," then that body becomes rejectable. We would have to question whether the institutional body of the *ācārya* is, in truth, fully engaged in *yajña*. To the extent that the constituents of the *ācārya's* institutional body are fully absorbed in *yajña*, to that extent they are spiritual. Conversely, to the extent that they are deviated toward sundry gross and subtle material pursuits or substandard, conditional spiritual pursuits, to that extent they could hardly be considered

spiritually fit – or perhaps their legitimacy as actual constituents should be wholly dismissed. In other words, we should sagaciously question whether the "constituents" that are materially or in other ways conditionally absorbed are at all real constituents of the spiritual master's institutional body, or only apparent constituents having no genuine relation as parts and parcels of the true form of the *ācārya's* institution although seeming to be integrally related. Viewed sanely, they may be deemed as reflections (*pratibimba*) of constituents, shadows (*chāyā*) of constituents, partial constituents, or perhaps atrophied constituents.

If we accept the body of the *ācārya* as qualitatively identical to the soul within that body, we might analogously conclude that the institutional or societal body of the *ācārya* should be seen as identical to the *ācārya* himself, the *sampradāya's* pure representative. We would then have to willingly admit that those customarily seen as constituents of the institutional body who are not purely absorbed in unalloyed devotional *yajña* as per the ideals and standards of the *ācārya's sampradāya* could hardly be accepted as parts of the *ācārya's* institution in the true sense, although claiming to be or masquerading as such. Granting that the *ācārya* is a *mahā-bhāgavata*, an unalloyed devotee of the Lord, the institution purported to be his body would necessarily have to embody his ideals as a completely spiritual manifestation of the purest *sampradāyic* principles, as an external exemplar of internal devotional substance, qualitatively one with the *ācārya*. If that were so, then wherever we would see a dearth of unalloyed devotional substance, we would naturally have to question whether what we are seeing before us is, in fact, the real form of the institution. Otherwise, since the quality of the disciples is said to reflect the quality of the *guru*, someone might wonder whether the institutional anomalies represent impurities or a lack of qualification on the part of the *ācārya* himself. Hence, they who, though declaring institutional membership, consciously or ignorantly undermine, either by precept or by personal conduct, the true *sampradāyic* conclusions and decline to comply with the *sampradāya's* ultimate purpose of facilitating

the total range of unalloyed devotional experience in its members, could scarcely themselves be accepted as bona fide *sampradāyic* representatives of the *ācārya's* institution. In other words, we would have to very seriously question, what or who actually constitutes the institution of the *ācārya*? Once again we discerningly distinguish between ostensible external form and constitutive substance or spirit. Institutional form (traditional or innovative) not constitutionally based on or inclusive of essential *sampradāyic* substance is supposititious, semblant, or at best spiritually substandard or fractional.

Why say that the institution is the body of the *ācārya*? Given that the *ācārya* is the representative of Lord Caitanya, we should be able to reasonably conclude that the institution is, in fact, the body of Lord Caitanya. Yet, it is seen that, in the course of His manifested earthly pastimes, Mahāprabhu uncompromisingly dismissed His own devotees who deviated from standard devotional proprieties. Similarly Advaita Ācārya openly rejected a few of His own sons due to their preaching erroneous conclusions. A son is considered an expansion of his father's own body. They were His sons; still, He unhesitatingly disowned them. In the same way, if on account of sadly sensing a spiritual impotence, a disciplic incompetence among its membership, Mahāprabhu would deem an institution established by any eminent representative of His *ācārya-paramparā* effectually useless in the matter of practically advancing His intended missionary objectives, He may see fit to altogether discard or perhaps sideline the ineffective community until (if and when) its half-slumbering constituents eventually wake up, wise up, and actually take up and powerfully preach the progressive path of beatified *vraja-bhakti-bhajana* for the benefit of the world. Meanwhile, the pure broad-minded souls adhering to the path illuminated by the expressed ideals of the Gauḍīya *ācāryas*, whether linked to this, that, or any other branch of the Caitanya tree, institution or no institution, will be selected and empowered by Lord Gaurāṅga to do the *sampradāya's* real propagation work. They will be credited with carrying forward or helping the Lord to

fully expand His ten-thousand-year golden era of maximum mercy within this darkest nightmare Age of Kali, as the rest remain satisfied with an ongoing mere semblance of the *sampradāya's* legacy.

Sometimes the example is given that the Gaṅgā, even though filled with filthy debris (stool, corpses, factory waste, and other assorted garbage), is still the Gaṅgā. It is always pure, no matter what. So in the same way, the *ācārya's* institution is assumed to be always pure, even if it is burdened by many impurities. But the stool floating in the Gaṅgā is not the Gaṅgā. Neither are the dead bodies, the oodles of scattered plastic bags, the laundry soap bubbles, the oil slicks, nor the other abounding ungodly contaminants carried by the Gaṅgā. The Gaṅgā is the Gaṅgā. Whatever is impure or rejectable is brushed aside or disregarded, and then we take our bath in the Gaṅgā. We don't take our bath in the stool. We don't take our bath in the dead bodies. We take our bath in the Gaṅgā. Gaṅgā water itself is pure. But if we were to make the mistake of thinking that the corpses, stool, or other debris are identical with the Gaṅgā, are as venerable or as important as the Gaṅgā, or are parts and parcels of the Gaṅgā, then our thinking would certainly be a grand parade of sheer stupidity. The correct understanding of the analogy should be as follows: The Gaṅgā is analogous to the *sampradāyic* flow, not to the institution. The pure form of the institution corresponds to an obstruction-free stretch of the Gaṅgā's riverbed channeling the river's (*sampradāya's*) powerful current. Superfluous stool, corpses, and garbage represent various petty *anarthas*, while massive sand dunes, crags, and dams correspond to more seriously obstructive misconceptions, philosophical deviations, and exploitative tendencies. The unalloyed *sampradāyic* flow that is to be channeled by an institution is certainly pure. The institution can also be considered pure and wholesome to the extent that it actually facilitates the free-flowing current of pure and powerful *sampradāyic siddhānta*. To that end, the various *apasiddhāntic* anomalies or non-devotional absurdities vexing

an institution's state of affairs must be diligently circumvented or discarded by a concerted institutional *anartha-nivṛtti*. At any rate, the bath is not to be taken in the institution or in the various attending *anarthas*. The bath is to be taken in the pure teachings of the *sampradāya* obtained wherever we can fortunately gain the association of genuine, highly enlightened *sādhus*. Then one will make progress, becoming purified not by the institution per se but by availing oneself of, adhering to, and serving the progressive current of the *sampradāya's* unalloyed devotional teachings.

Another example: If there was no water in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, who would be interested to go there for bath? A *kuṇḍa* without water would hardly be considered much of a *kuṇḍa*. The steps leading into the *kuṇḍa* facilitate our approach to the water, but if we were to slip or trip on a loose stepping stone, we might fall on our butt or break our head before having the chance to take a dip. The idea is to take bath in the water, not in the steps. Similarly, the institution is set up to facilitate our access to the liquid mellows of the *sampradāyic* truths. If we get hung up on the institution to the point where we fail to honor the *sampradāyic* truths, then what would be the use of all the gorgeous socio-institutional arrangements?

To further illustrate, a shower in a shower-room is called a shower not because there is a nicely tiled shower stall with a nice shower curtain and a first-class shower fixture, soap dish, towel ring, and ingenious drainage system. Unless a shower of water comes forcefully showering out of the shower's shower head, a "shower" would be a shower in name only. The corresponding components of the analogy should be obvious. If there is no water or just a trickle, who in their right mind would sensibly accept it to be a shower? Similarly, regardless of exhaustive institutional sophistication, if at the end of the day we were to dejectedly notice a drought of high-level unalloyed devotional instruction, or barely a dribble persisting from the orifices of the elegant institutional fixtures, how could we realistically infer the presence of a full-force *sampradāyic* flow?

It is not the institution that makes the *sampradāya*. The *sampradāya* is not the institution. *Sampradāya* means school – a school of thought, an angle of vision or approach to the Absolute to be disseminated through the medium of an *ācārya-paramparā*. If the institution preserves and aids endowment of the pure teachings of the *ācāryas* to posterity, then the institution, as a facilitator, is a viable instrument in the hands of the *sampradāya*. It's helping the *sampradāya* do its job. But if the institution fails to recognize and responsibly fulfill the ultimate purpose of the *sampradāya's* very existence, the institution becomes more or less worthless in that the *sampradāya's* true or ultimate legacy would be forbidden to flow beyond the barrage of shoddy institutional cerebral misconstructions and auxiliary convolutions thereof. Just as the Gaṅgā naturally seeks the path of least resistance, so also, unsurprisingly, the *sampradāya's* current flows wherever it finds a channel unobstructed by the various categories of spiritual inadequacy and mundane affinity.

Where lives the *sampradāya*? The *sampradāya* is not found in the bricks and buttresses of a bunch of buildings. The *sampradāya* is not recognizable simply by a blazing bodily *tilaka* decoration or an institutionally standardized mode of attire. The *sampradāya* is not the holding of a pompous board of baboons expert at botching the business on behalf of the spiritual master. The *sampradāya* is not a bluffing brigade. Actually, the *sampradāya* remains with anyone who truly adheres to the principles of unalloyed devotion and disseminates the esoteric axioms of the *Bhāgavata* in a way that powerfully transforms the hearts of the conditioned souls so as to inspirationally bring them to the path of unalloyed devotion. A person on the path of unalloyed devotion has no purpose other than to attain the spontaneous loving service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the realm of Vraja and help others do the same. Unless and until we wise up and actually embrace this understanding of the purpose of Lord Caitanya's preaching movement and resolutely help to

wholly fulfill that purpose, there will be so much disturbance and distress within the institutional fold.

Very often we hear dreadfully erroneous expositions of *abhidheya-vicāra* doggedly presented as if to preclude any prospect of pursuing *rāgānuga-bhajana*, on the pretext of protecting the *prajā* from prying into places where the presumed-to-be poor little fledglings shouldn't venture – explaining away the philosophy instead of explaining the philosophy. Such may appear to be ecclesiastically expedient but hardly satisfies the soul's quest for truth. Of course, it may temporarily serve to ward off inquiries beyond the "preacher's" explanatory power. However, by resorting to such impotent dissertative travesty, one appears to be no better than a blundering buffoon to individuals conversant with the *śāstric* conclusions. Preaching is the essence. There is no doubt about that. Within the compass of any socially interrelating institutional preaching complex, preaching in some way or other, either by precept or by example, is virtually inescapable. That is the significance of both good and bad association. Atheists also ascend the lecterns to preach their conjectural world view. It is not so much a question whether or not one is preaching. Rather, it is more the matter of what is (or is not) being preached. The intelligent relatively fixed-up disciples can certainly glean the essence of the *ācāryas'* teachings simply by sincerely studying the *śāstras*. Unfortunately, they then very often become disappointed and discouraged by the well-intended misguidance of some of their esteemed rather neophyte "authorities" who, miserably misrepresenting the conclusions of the Gauḍīya *ācāryas*, confound the affairs, thereby practically retarding the submissive disciples' spiritual growth by disallowing them to make the progress they really need to make to actually achieve the ultimate goal of their rarely attained human life. Time and tide linger for none, life relentlessly slips through their fingers, and hundreds of institutionally committed disciples devoid of any inkling of their eternal constitutional *vraja-svarūpa* clamor at death's door.

At times the *sampradāya* appears to broaden its influence, manifesting many concurrent branches within or even beyond the margins of any particular institutional milieu, as a number of pure-hearted, spiritually empowered individuals endeavor to propagate the correct, unadulterated *bhāgavata-siddhānta*. At other times, it appears that, due to a dearth of qualified recipients, the *sampradāya* reposes its authority in a singular individual who single-handedly preserves the *sampradāya's* pure spiritual legacy. Such an *ācārya* may not be at the helm of a huge institution supporting world-wide missionary activities. Yet because he carries within his heart of hearts the complete-whole manifestation of Lord Kṛṣṇa along with His *antaraṅga-śaktis*, he is quite fit to pass on the true *sampradāyic* tradition. Even though his pure teachings might be rightly received by just a single qualified disciple, that one disciple may in turn impress the same upon many. There is ample precedence for this in the history of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Still, at other times, it may be seen that an *ācārya* intentionally establishes a nation-wide or world-wide institution to facilitate large-scale propaganda work, but only a few or even only one among his thousands of initiated disciples actually catch the essential current of the *sampradāya's* teachings and become perfectly qualified to impart the pure esoteric *sampradāyic* principles to subsequent generations. That is also not unheard of. It is understood from *ācārya-vāṇī* that upon contacting *sad-guru* a disciple generally requires three lifetimes before coming to the stage of ultimate perfection, *vastu-siddhi*. The spiritual master's different disciples are not on the same rung of *bhakti's* evolutionary ladder. Some of the disciples are in the course of their first acquaintance with *sad-guru*. In this lifetime their attempt to chant the Holy Name will be, more often than not, fraught with offense. Owing to meager devotional fortitude, they will not likely achieve the *adhikāra* required to transcend rudimentary devotional practices and so must intelligently submit themselves to the force of stringent *vaidhika* rules and regulations to have any

devotional standing at all. Others are in the course of their second attempt. Chanting *nāmābhāsa*, they will gradually gain steadiness and the eligibility to pursue the path of *rāga*. A few may progress to the terrace of *bhāva* and *prema* by chanting *śuddha-nāma*, having come to their third lifetime of service at the feet of *sad-guru*. After quitting the present *sādhaka-deha*, they will be promoted to the *prakaṭa-līlās* of the Lord. The chronological sequence of initiation does not necessarily correspond to the progressive levels of advancement of the different disciples. Though the *ācārya's* senior disciples might rightfully claim or demand the junior's customary respect, as per external protocol, the natural esteem offered to first-class *paramahaṁsas* can be genuinely elicited only when devotees of a discerning eye undoubtingly acknowledge appreciable levels of practical renunciation coupled with scripturally sound pure devotional expression. Certainly, those who chant offensively, regardless of disciplic seniority or institutional echelon, can hardly be accepted as bona-fide agents of the *sampradāyic* flow. To be real, only an elevated, spiritually endowed disciple, having achieved the internal standing of a *mahā-bhāgavata* on the basis of *śuddha-nāma-bhajana* is substantially fit to act as an empowered agent of the *bhāgavata-sampradāya*. Such a spiritually qualified individual, though not necessarily assuming any earth-shattering external institutional hierarchical status, will, in fact, timely and powerfully manifest the *sampradāya's* profoundest influence. In the interim, many others, institutionally "big" or "small," who are more or less preoccupied with varying degrees of watered-down, exoterically configured pragmatistic philosophy that often verily accommodate their own subtle or gross personal and extended self-aggrandizing concerns and who maintain an apathy toward unalloyed devotional absorption, though perhaps very much institutionally involved, will effectively remain more or less on the factual *sampradāya's* periphery. When these spiritually naive, *siddhāntically* unapprised, or materially ambitious "disciples" endeavor to climb the corporate

institutional ladder to access and occupy key administrative positions for the purpose of pursuing their sundry ulterior objectives, what institutional anomalous or farcical consequences can we not expect? Would we deem sickly or convalescing in-patients at a hospital to be part of the established medical institution itself? Would it not be more realistic to objectively regard them as clients having the good opportunity to access the convenient medical facility offered by the hospital? If an in-patient misinterprets or declines to follow the doctor's advice or if a patient without passable medical training and experience decides to do quackery in the hospital's lobby, should we take such to be part of the hospital? Is an attending student at a university to be taken as part of the educational institution, or is the student simply the recipient of the institution's tutelage? Even if we posit the meaninglessness of a university without students, would it be at all proper for an upstart student bereft of adequate erudition and wisdom to pompously profess to be a professor? If a psychiatric patient having no clear recollection of his or her true identity impersonates a psychiatrist, would we behold a pinnacle of sanity? When money talks, everything walks. Bucks – the basis, preaching – the excuse, futility – the principle, and, as one might guess, purity (spiritual sanity) – a farce.

We can scarcely see among us deeply absorbed natural *paramahaṁsas* possessed of markedly elevated transcendental consciousness evinced by expressed mature spiritual insight and discretion. Nor would we generally expect internally immersed *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇavas to be very much attentive to the nitty-gritty of direct hands-on institutional management. Unsurprisingly, fate would often have it that by default various less spiritually evolved individuals take the helm, even though they may be unacquainted with – even virtually oblivious to – the *rasika* culture of unalloyed devotion, as per the scientific, systematic exposition of the *vraja-bhakti* paradigm seen in the *ācāryas*' writings. Still others, often owing to their assorted, relatively handy material qualifications,

are ceremoniously taken on board as additional digits in the equation, though their perceptions, conceptions, and judgments are relatively impure and unwarrantable in that they have yet to rise above the four defects of conditional existence. We could hardly expect the majority of an institution's administrators to be on the highest perfectional platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As such, canonical or ecclesiastico-managerial decisions arrived at on the basis of majority vote may often be fraught with material conception, *apasiddhānta*, and compromise by dint of confusion, distortion, mundane wrangling, or agnosticism devoid of *sampradāyic* authority, thus rendering the whole show relatively *asāra*, or useless. It is imperative, therefore, that the religio-institutional administration have the integrity, willingness, and intelligence to recognize and accept the salient advice of those impartial few who are actually pure, spiritually elevated, free from false pride, unenvious, and beyond the sway of material influences.

The idea that a body of executors dubbed the "ultimate managing authority" of a societal organization be reckoned, heralded, or broadly accepted as head of the socio-bodily infrastructure of such a society is sheer misconstruction and a flight of the imagination – a calamitous contravention of *daivī-varṇāśrama* principia. Individuals displaying a passion for administrative overlordship may brandish considerable diplomatic dexterity in the matter of cleverly hoodwinking lay practitioners into accepting the alleged legitimacy of various covertly contrived ecclesiastical managerial maneuvers, but mere spectacle of tactical proficiency hardly adds up to an air of brahminical intelligence. Institutional governance is certainly the prerogative of *kṣatriya*-spirited devotees. In the scheme of things, these devotees, who do far better when they comport themselves as righteous *rājarṣis* rather than as menacing Mafiosi, basically serve as the arms of the institution. Their function is

to protect the society's movable and immovable assets, ensure economic stability, see that the various classes of devotees are peacefully prosecuting their prescribed religious duties, and curb the cheating propensity of the neophytes. A *rājarṣi* is considered a saintly administrator, however, on account of his openness to respectfully abide by the good counsel of truthful, qualified *brahmarṣis* and advanced unalloyed devotees of the Lord, who are not so managerially encumbered. Any initiate acting in any social capacity may be regarded, on one level or another, as some kind of Vaiṣṇava. Even so, those who are true *brāhmaṇas* and *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇavas by quality and work are undeniably the actual head of an institution's social set-up. A social body that either doesn't have or doesn't recognize its head is like a ship adrift without its rudder.

In an *ācārya's* physical presence, those acting as his zonal secretaries, as well as diverse other executive representatives, may easily receive guidance through his direct personal instructions. An *ācārya* himself acts as the society's head, directly approving or disapproving the actions of his society's managerial arms as he sees fit. An *ācārya* may even see it necessary to totally rescind the managerial authority personally invested in his zonal representatives if the latter deviate from his expressed will. Such a scenario is certainly not unheard-of.

But what happens after an *ācārya's* inopportune physical demise? All his disciples may take refuge in his recorded *vāṇī* to gain inspiration and positive direction for advancing the cause of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Still, it would be most unreasonable to conclude that those somewhat managerially adept individuals to whom the *ācārya* had delegated certain arm-related executive responsibilities should, in the *ācārya's* absence, suddenly seek to assume the position of the society's socio-religious head – likewise with the subsequently deputed new generations of international, zonal, and local managers.

We could hardly think those possessed of supposed executive-class intelligence tilting toward diplomacy, compromise, duplicity, unjustifiable psychological coercion, covert administrative wrangling, connivance, collusion, and conspiracy for the forward march of various "Kṛṣṇa conscious" managerial agenda or political ambitions, to be having a clearer, more advanced *śāstric* perception of reality than those who are impartial, managerially unencumbered, and, in fact, to a much larger extent, brahminically occupied. The attempt of managerially engrossed individuals lacking superior brahminical transparency to administer institutional affairs without respecting genuine brahminical counsel simply perpetuates a socially imbalanced quasi-devotional society of cheaters and cheated – bungling *bhaktas* who brainlessly buy into the burgeoning business of bureaucratic befuddlement. To show due deference to the spiritual needs of the individuals who constitute the society, proper brahminical direction must always prevail over administrative concerns.

From the Vedic sociological standpoint, we might mindfully deduce the following:

1) *Brāhmaṇas* can be seen as spiritually and intellectually qualified anarchists. To practically function in the capacity duly prescribed for them in the *śāstras*, they really require a demilitarized ambience wherein they may peacefully and creatively exercise their God-given right to be self-regulating, independently thoughtful people. Naturally, the independence afforded to them brings with it the highest constitutional responsibility, namely selfless sacrifice in the direct service of *guru* and Godhead.

2) Real *kṣatriyas* are basically noble-minded God-conscious monarchists. They are meant to rule their domains on behalf of the *brāhmaṇas* who in effect have factual dominion over the world on behalf of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

3) *Vaiśyas* are theistic charitable capitalists.

4) *Śūdras* are theocentric working-class socialists or communists.

There is a place for anarchy in human society. There is a place for monarchy in human society. So also is there a place for capitalism and communism. The *daivī-varṇāśrama* cultural paradigm scientifically accommodates these four dissimilar social ideologies in perfect equilibrium under the one banner of service to the Absolute. It is simply a matter of recognizing, facilitating, and suitably balancing the needs of different kinds of people. In view of social distinctions on the basis of diverse individual psycho-physical dispositions, it would be irresponsible on the part of any one section of society to artificially impose a single ideology upon all. This would force a state of stultification upon the social order. Similarly, encroaching upon or crippling another's God-given station hinders the affected individual's natural socio-constitutional development. Members of an establishment erected to facilitate the gradual progress of internal pure devotional absorption (*antaraṅga-bhakti*) may in the beginning need to be externally or conditionally engaged in light of various individual psycho-physical requirements. To that end, many devotees, while inwardly striving to cultivate pure devotional sentiments, may outwardly appear to be socially stationed on the basis of *varṇāśrama* considerations that naturally demand certain prescribed social limitations. One who has achieved a profound taste for pure devotional practices is in fact no longer obliged to strictly abide by external *varṇāśrama* laws. *Vidhi-dharma chāḍi' bhaje kṛṣṇera caraṇa / niṣiddha pāpācāre tāra kabhu nahe mana*. "Although the pure devotee does not follow all the regulative principles of *varṇāśrama*, he worships the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore he naturally has no tendency to commit sin." (*Cc. Madhya* 22.142) For such a *sādhaka*, who is actually beyond mundane designations and their concomitant *varṇāśrama* obligations, adherence to *varṇāśrama* prescripts is optional. However, as long as one has yet to achieve *śuddha-nāma-ruci*, as long as one is likely to pursue material desires, in other words, as long as one's engagement on the basis of psycho-physical considerations

is an issue, even though one may pride oneself to be a Vaiṣṇava having received *pāñcarātrika-dīkṣā*, or even if one happens to truly be a *jāta-ruci* Vaiṣṇava but has preferred to mercifully profile as a social exemplar, one must respectfully submit to the constraints upon one's external status to avoid an escalation of adverse communal anomalies. Pure Vaiṣṇavas circumstantially doing the needful to further the cause of Kṛṣṇa consciousness may externally act in any social capacity. Still, when acting as *brāhmaṇas*, they must externally adhere to brahminical codes of conduct; when acting in the administrative capacity as *kṣatriyas*, they must honorably abide by the standard social etiquette prescribed for *kṣatriyas*; and when acting as *vaiśyas* or *śūdras*, they must similarly follow appropriate social protocol. Noncompliance would be rather roguish. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself declared, *nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśyo na śūdro nāhaṁ varṇī na ca gṛha-patir no vana-stho yatir vā . . . gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ*. "I am neither a *brāhmaṇa*, nor a *kṣatriya* . . . The only designation that I wish to accept is that of a servant of the servant of the servant of Kṛṣṇa." He was transcendentally situated. Yet, externally as a *sannyāsī*, He very strictly followed the religious duties of the *sannyāsa* order so as not to effect a decline of social standards. Harmonious social interdependence and cooperation within any Vedic cultural institution can come into view only when the different classes of individuals involved sensibly honor the specialties and diverse social parameters of each and every aspect of the *daivī-varṇāśrama* system.

Amalgamation of administrative and brahminical functions is quite objectionable. Even if provisory modifications in the social complex are justified by force of emergency circumstances, they would hardly be deemed ideal. Division of labor is actually required – and for a very good reason. It is not that individuals functioning in the arms capacity, though they may be Vaiṣṇavas, should doggedly insist on also acting as the head, as if there's no

need to acknowledge the presence of distinguished brahminically qualified Vaiṣṇavas. Nor should they act as though there is no need for a social head. Nor should they imagine that a governing body of flapping arm-like managerially engaged individuals constitutes the highest religio-institutional headship. If for no other reason than to set a proper example to benefit others, Vaiṣṇavas playing the part of administrators (*kṣatriyas*), though perhaps internally very elevated, should nevertheless attune to their social role in toto by externally paying due deference to the counsel of Vaiṣṇavas acting in the brahminical capacity. There is ample precedence for this in the examples of great Vaiṣṇava kings such as Mahārāja Janaka, Mahārāja Ambarīṣa, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, and others. Celebrated saintly *kṣatriyas* appearing in the solar dynasty extending from Manu to Mahārāja Ikṣvāku and others, though highly competent to act as *gurus* in *paramparā*, having received through disciplic succession the highest conclusions of the Gītā, nonetheless paid humble homage to the *brāhmaṇas*. Even the Supreme Guru, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Lord Rāmacandra alike, playing the part of *kṣatriyas*, in the course of Their *līlās* deferentially honored and sought the good counsel of qualified *brāhmaṇas* to demonstrate the principle by Their own example. Again, eligible individuals who intend to act in the brahminical or head-like capacity should voluntarily relinquish arm-like administrative designations and engagements to accept higher social responsibilities and, within the context of the institutional setting, independently situate themselves in such a way that they can practically function as a clear-thinking head without being swayed by the temptation to pursue diplomatic affairs and the like. They should focus on purely brahminical activities and as far as possible keep themselves aloof from managerial entanglements and various political exploits so that they may have the clear-sightedness and purity of heart needed for truth to spotlessly manifest in their intelligence. *Paṭhana pāṭhana yajana yājana dāna pratigraha* – these are the brahminical

engagements, and it is by observable degrees of proficiency in the execution of these brahminical duties combined with qualities such as those mentioned in the Gītā (*śamo damas tapaḥ śaucaṁ . . .*) that the measure of an individual's brahminical aptitude is to be appreciated. Brahminically inclined devotees should be allowed to free themselves from those activities which tend to deter them from their resolute absorption in pure brahminical culture. By culture of appropriate activities consistent with brahminical standards, they may easily augment their personal purity, achieve respectability as trustworthy representatives of pure spiritual values, and gain the recognition and confidence of the subordinate sections of society. With due respect to all the *prabhus*, the current breakdown of love and trust in the society of devotees is basically attributable to the recurring, unbridled, Machiavellian dastardly hypocritical deeds of the (what is now ceremoniously palmed off as) religio-institutional leadership. The simple truth is that unless an independent, self-reliant brahminical entity is established beyond the control of the institutional governing body, there really can be neither a viable, socially operative, *śāstrically* warranted religio-institutional headship nor reliable and accountable armship.

A *brāhmaṇa's* principal quality of truthfulness may easily become compromised if he allows himself to come under the control of the administrative class. His cooperation with an institution's administration does not at all require his subjugation by executive authority, provided he adheres to the brahminical codes of conduct. Mutual cooperation, as an expression of love for the institutional founder-*ācārya*, obliges the executors to execute the will of the *brāhmaṇas* under the edicts and precepts of the *ācārya* – not that frank and honest *brāhmaṇas* are minimized, affronted, and dominated by the marshal-spirited managers who in turn flatteringly court the easily corruptible, money-mad, business-brained, *vaiśya*-like neophytes and so forth. It is not that a contingency of opportunistic so-called

brāhmaṇas (*brahma-bandhus*) shall be kept under the thumb of the executors, like expendable chattels for interpretively screwing out "*śāstric* evidence" to momentously suit and justify purposely perpetrated *apasiddhāntic*, communally imbalanced "party-line" miscomputations. They who opt to bend, water down, compromise, or obscure the truth to suit various inveigling materially conceived managerial agenda on the plea of propagating the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are not truthful *brāhmaṇas*, what then of being *paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇavas. Just as an *ācārya's* book trust, though fashioned to fulfill certain institutional objectives, may be constituted as an independent managerial authority beyond the jurisdiction of the institution's governing body – just as other trusts such as M.V.T. may be similarly constituted in collaboration with their mother institution – so in the same way, a brahminical advisory entity to which a governing body must be held accountable may also be established above and beyond the jurisdiction of the institution's governing body. If the head-like brahminical council is subordinated by the arm-like governing body, there is every likelihood that the former may be headlocked or bullied by the latter into resignedly espousing the administration's often-half-baked discombobulated party-line policies instead of being allowed to stand up independently for truth, to which the administration must sensibly submit. In accordance with the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, the governing body (an administrative entity) must be answerable to the consensus of a brahminical council. The legs are intended to carry the body under the direction of the head. The belly is to nourish the entire body to help fulfill the purpose of the body's very existence, which is to be ascertained by the head. The arms are to protect the body's existence under the guidance of the head. It is the head, not the arms, belly, or legs, that decides the purpose and right direction of the socio-institutional body at large. It is not that the governing-body bureaucrats should misconstrue the term "ultimate managing authority" to mean

"ultimate authority," wrongly posing themselves as absolute indubitable hegemonic religio-corporate power brokers. It is not that devotees acting in an administrative or ruling capacity don't need to seek the approbation and blessings of those devotees who are by and large brahminically occupied. Second-class intelligent managers are not the ultimate authority in Vedic society. Truthful first-class intellectual Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas* are the ultimate guiding authority as per the *daivī-varṇāśrama* blueprint.

Just as an *ācārya* during his physical presence checks the behavior of his zonal secretaries, so too in the *ācārya's* absence, an independently powerful purely brahminical intelligentsia must be recognized and solidly established to advise, correct, or even, when required, disband or dethrone the executive oligarchy when the latter strays from the unequivocal directives of *guru*, *sadhu*, and *śāstra*. Our founder-*ācārya*, seeing the topsy-turvy Kali-yuga condition of the world, repeatedly expressed the need to train up qualified *brāhmaṇas* to assume the role of social head in order to rectify the ills of a present-day misdirected state of human affairs. To this end, it may be assumed that he tried his level best. To advocate that the establishment of an institution's brahminical head is in any way unfeasible is to suggest that either there really is no need for a body to have a head after all, or that perhaps certain individuals are attached to a scheme of unbridled institutional dominance, erroneously thinking that Vaiṣṇavas, who are above *varṇāśrama*, need not conform to *varṇāśrama* protocol while managerially "doing the needful," or else that the *ācārya's* attempt to create a class of spiritually intelligent *brāhmaṇas* to guide society was unsuccessful. However, considering his probable success, they who would be capable of offering guidance to the whole of greater humanity would certainly be qualified to positively advise the administrative-class executors of his relatively tiny institution. One might incisively question the likelihood of reestablishing a head on a macrocosmic human society if we ourselves could not

even practicably implement the principle on a microcosmic scale. If a religio-institutional exemplar of *daivī-varṇāśrama* society could not be practically established, then from what living example of the thing would humanity at large have to draw? Moreover, if we were to surmise that the *ācārya* was unable to train up qualified *brāhmaṇas*, how could we ever think him successful in the matter of creating self-effulgent *śuddha-sattvic paramahaṁsa* Vaiṣṇavas fit to model as successor *sampradāyic ācāryas*, transcendental to the *sattvic* brahminical qualifications in every respect? It should not be concluded, however, that "because I'm not very much spiritually advanced or qualified, none other could possibly be more advanced or qualified than me" – *ātmavan manyate jagat*.

From the onset of Kali-yuga, *brāhmaṇas* as a class lost their headship credibility in the eyes of the subordinate social divisions as a result of a general increase of religious hypocrisy and crass, self-centered petty materialism abounding particularly among those who laid claim to hereditary brahmanism. Yet simply by sidelining the *brāhmaṇas* with a view to arbitrarily administer political affairs, the *kṣatriyas*, who were no less affected by Kali's influences, could not sustain the trust of the similarly dishonest and increasingly selfish Kali-yuga *vaiśyas*, who in turn sought by various capitalistic maneuvers to overthrow the self-indulgent hegemonic so-called *kṣatriya* overlords. And, of course, as history would have it, the *śūdras* and sundry other humanoid social degenerates, unable to tolerate the exploitative monkey business of the merchants and money changers, revolted against their exploiters to uppishly establish their own brand of hedonistic honesty among thieves. That's just the way the Kali-yuga cookie crumbled. However, despite all that, it was not at all the *ācārya's* intention that the Kali-yuga derangement of the *varṇāśrama* system should persist – at least not in the context of a controlled socio-religious institutional environment. If we are to accept that all the *ācārya's* disciplic descendants are Vaiṣṇavas

simply by dint of *nāma* and *mantra* initiation, and that being a Vaiṣṇava transcendental to *varṇāśrama* considerations renders the call to externally honor traditional *daivī-varṇāśrama* social protocol null and void even while one advantageously occupies various socio-religious incumbencies, then why waste our invaluable time discussing and discussing the *ācārya's* presumably insightful instructions concerning the apparently practical institutional and trans-institutional inculcation of *daivī-varṇāśrama* behavioral standards? Why pay lip-service to the organization of society in terms of the *varṇāśrama* scheme of societal divisions unless we are willing to exercise the humility, discrimination, and appropriate determination needed to honor and follow the attendant inter-class etiquette?

At the end of the day, unless one's adherence to *daivī-varṇāśrama-dharma* in some way promotes a fondness for hearing, chanting, and remembering Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *mādhurya-līlā-guṇa-rūpa-nāma*, unless it enables one to become cognizant of one's eternal constitutional relationship with the Lord of Vraja, moreover, unless all such external psycho-physical bodily regulation actually helps to bring one to the point of love of Godhead on the fully self-realized platform, then *śrama eva hi kevalam* – the whole affair is simply so much useless endeavor, leading only to the formation of another material body. Let everyone immediately get off the material platform and focus exclusively on the internal culture of unalloyed devotion, bearing very little if any concern for the rules and regulations of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. *Eta saba chāḍi' āra varṇāśrama-dharma akiñcana hañā laya kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa*. "Without hesitation, one should take exclusive shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa with full confidence, giving up bad association and even neglecting the regulative principles of the four *varṇas* and four *āśramas*. That is to say, one should abandon all material attachment." (*Cc. Madhya* 22.93) *Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* – the most basic ABCD's of spiritual life. Reestablishment of *varṇāśrama* principles in society, though

organizationally useful and important on one level as far as institutional progress or Vedic social intercourse goes, is quite secondary and even superfluous to the culture of unalloyed devotion. It is neither the primary concern of the *ācāryas* nor the goal of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya's teachings. The *ācāryas'* primary objective is to propagate love of Godhead, *vraja-prema*, via the process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and their secondary objective is to reestablish *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Even if it is circumstantially found that an institution's bureaucracy deviates in various ways from the pursuit of these primary and secondary *sampradāyic* or institutional objectives, even if Kali's clerically cloaked secret agents infiltrate various echelons of the institutional establishment to subvert, hijack, or derail the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, that will not dissuade the faithful *sāra-grāhī* Vaiṣṇavas, however obscure or unassuming they may be, from pursuing and, wherever possible, overtly or even, when required, covertly preaching the principles of *rāga-mārgānugamana-prema-dharma*. Perhaps only a very few of those associated with them will fortunately catch the real idea and become adequately qualified to carry forth the progressive current of the *sampradāya's rasa*-imbued heritage.

Many will be pleased to prostitute the pure devotional principles for affectedly dignified, institutionally conventionalized substandard objectives which accommodate conditional devotional, mixed devotional, quasi-devotional, or non-devotional attachments. Some would be happy just to get the hell out of this hellhole and go to Vaikuṇṭha. Others would be gratified to go to heaven. Some are more than happy to hoard their collected *guru-dakṣiṇā* in their secret Swiss bank accounts. Others keen on contractual so-called devotional engagements are rapaciously bent on bringing home their monthly wage packets (Ooops! I mean their *gṛhaṣṭha* "maintenance allowances"). Anyway, however we euphemize the thing, they get their padded positions – their hearth and home, their conveyances, and their promised pensions upon retirement.

The institution becomes practically like any other materialistic corporate establishment. It may be pragmatically convenient to contractually bind people in order to ensure an externally impressive illusion of managerial success, but in terms of generating an atmosphere of pure, unconditional devotion, it does no more than increase our indigestion. Nevertheless, it's easier to pay people to do the jobs than to engage them in acts of pure devotion. So it looks like the jobs are getting done. The floors are getting swept; the Deities' *bhoga* offerings are getting cooked; the *pūjā* is being covered; the funds are being raised. There is even a semblance of institutional management. However, no one gets the benefit of entering an atmosphere that is surcharged with unconditional devotion, simply because the pure devotional energy is most conspicuously lacking. Performing services with a view to gaining material amenities hardly even constitutes *karma-yoga*, what to speak of *bhakti*. Some individuals, making excuses for themselves, are simply satisfied with short-term genital infatuations on the plea of "Kṛṣṇa conscious" home life. Still others boldly campaign for the institutional ratification of "Kṛṣṇa conscious" homosexuality, and so on and so forth.

When an individual or the consensus or joint action of a body of individuals accords with the principles of *sampradāya* as per the decisions of *guru*, *sādhu*, and *śāstra*, then only will the words and deeds of such individuals elicit our commendation and compliance. Conversely, it would be most indecorous of an individual or body of individuals deviating in various ways from standard *sampradāyic* conclusions, regardless of ecclesiastico-administrative bearing, to expect or demand anyone's unreserved avowed allegiance. Our fealty shall be to the service of truth, not to the dumbed-down slavedom of politically rationalized philosophical misconstruction.

Everything is undoubtedly orchestrated by the Supreme Controller to mete out the various circumstantial requirements of every devotional candidate. It is not by chance or for no good

reason that one soul gets genuine *sādhu-saṅga* and another has to hear from an avowed institutional charlatan. We all have to go through our various positive and negative learning experiences. No one can avoid cooperating, in some way or another, with the Lord's greater cosmic arrangement. However, it should be keenly noted that one result is attained by directly supporting the Lord's unimpeded munificence and another by indirectly serving as His cheating agent. It is not that, because we have "joined" a *mahā-bhāgavata's* promising spiritual institution (society), we cannot become cheaters, we cannot dull-headedly or mischievously mislead or under-edify people. "Jaya Gurudeva! Jaya Gurudeva!" But are we actually guiding them properly? Or are we cheating them by not allowing them to see what the *sampradāya* actually intends to teach. Years and years are wasted in misconception, both for the cheaters and for the cheated. And then, maybe, if one is fortunate (*bhāgyavān jīva*), one miraculously stumbles upon someone who can actually elucidate the essential import of the *śāstras* and mercifully offer proper internal devotional direction from the realized platform. Regardless of the extent to which the *prākṛta-bhaktas* and other show-bottle miserly institutional ignoramuses pride themselves to be satisfied that whatever they're doing on the basis of ulterior personal motives is in some way gratifying to the ego, mind, senses, or whatever, the true fact is that they will, in due course, eventually, in some lifetime or another, dejectedly recognize that their soul has not been satisfied. They have not become *prasannātmā*. Watered-down philosophy means watered-down result. Watered-down result means they are cheated and cannot become fully joyful. Becoming sufficiently frustrated, they may then, sooner or later, fortunately come to the position of crying out to Kṛṣṇa and honestly begging for the real thing in all humility.

Wherever we find a realized exemplar of the full array of unalloyed devotional wisdom, the personage's external institutional rank or social status notwithstanding, there we will behold a

perfectly holistic representative of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Perceptive truth-seeking people yearning for genuine spiritual substance are not impressed by any level of histrionic, institutional-*upādhi*-reinforced razzle-dazzle sermonizing. It may be argued that "Well, we, on various levels, are all representing the movement in the making." "Movement in the making" means to progressively move the bungling *bhaktas* from the position of unaccomplishment to the position of accomplishment, from imperfection to perfection, from impurity to purity. The idea is that the movement is like a hospital gradually moving everyone toward the healthy pure devotional ideal – not that one should idealistically expect everyone in the hospital to be perfectly healthy and pure. That's all right. We shouldn't unjustly cast aspersions upon the sincere patients (*sādhakas*), though they, with all their frailties, have yet to be fully disinfected. The point, though, is that the doctors should be healthy and pure. The movement's *ācāryas* (leaders) coming in the *ācārya-parampārā* should be pure and self-realized. It is not that there shall be no subsequent generations of *ācāryas*. All the disciples are instructed to come up to the decontaminated, liberated standard of *ācārya*. The offenseless *śuddha-nāma-bhajana/saṅkīrtanānandī* practically manifesting the pure attributes of an *ācārya*, who clearly ascertains, follows, and, from the realized position, propagates the scriptural conclusions, as per the decisions of the previous *ācāryas*, is to be considered a truly viable link in the *sampradāya's* disciplic succession. There really can be no feasible makeshift or stopgap "blind uncle" vicar. Disciplic succession means from *ācārya* to *ācārya* or *ācāryas*, not from *ācārya* to umpteen gazillion blockheads who, being too spiritually gutless to grasp the recognized esoteric method of unalloyed devotional realization, prefer to parade about, presumably on the plea of *para-upakāra*, preaching any retarded shabby so-called philosophy that blunderbusses out from their internally bankrupt, institutionally bamboozled, busy-bodying brainlessness.

Just as the series of crystal-clear lenses of a telescope brings a distant image within the purview of our eyes, in the same way, a *sampradāya's* transcendental heritage is brought into the scope of our understanding through a transparent medium, the chain of pure, spiritually potent representatives of the *ācārya-paramparā*. A chain of lenses is a clear and reliable as its faultiest lens. Dusty, foggy, flawed, warped, or impotent lenses will not do. To act as transparent medium means to allow others to clearly perceive the descending radiance of the *bhāgavata-siddhānta* by purely exemplifying the perfect application of the principles of *bhāgavata-dharma* (as per *sambandha-abhidheya-prayojana-vicāra*) on the basis of scriptural evidence and personal attainment. *Ācārya*, in the Gauḍīya line, really means one who is fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, who purely teaches the path of unalloyed devotional conduct (both external and internal) by personally imbibing and practically demonstrating the unalloyed, unconditional loving devotional ideals of the Vrajavāsīs. Whether a *nitya-siddha avatāra* appears in this world as an *ācārya*, or a *sādhana-siddha*, having attained perfection in a previous life, is reborn by the will of the Lord to act as *ācārya* in the service of the *sampradāya*, or one or more individuals in the present life gain the spiritual fitness to exemplify the principles of *vraja-prema-dharma* for the benefit of others, the role of *sampradāyic ācārya* is not a matter of institutional rubber-stamping. There's no question of institutional rubber-stamping. The rubber-stamping of *gurus* is, in fact, quite against the principles of *sampradāya*. It indicates neither purity nor high-caliber Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There actually has to <u>be</u> purity, and where there is purity coupled with realized *siddhānta*-based *rāga-māyī* unalloyed devotional expression, rubber-stamping or no rubber-stamping, there we may hope to see the actual current of the *sampradāya*.

No amount of institutional legislation has ever in the past ensured that the budding disciples will not get any other than *sad-guru*, nor does such presently offer any reasonable assurance to that

effect, nor can such ever feasibly promise a foolproof approach to *sad-guru* in the future. Glaring testimony of this statement rests in the much-less-than-unblemished post-founder-*ācarya* institutional track record. What more need be said? One gets *sad-guru* by the grace of God. Having accumulated suitable *sukṛti* by lifetimes of inadvertent contact with agents of *bhakti*, a fortunate *jīva* becomes inclined toward the service of the Absolute. When Kṛṣṇa, who is seated as Paramātma within the heart, directing the wanderings of every living entity since time immemorial, deems one the object of His mercy, then only, by His arrangement, is it possible for one to get the feet of *sad-guru* – not otherwise. By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, one gets *guru*, and by the mercy of a genuinely elevated Vaiṣṇava *guru*, one gets Kṛṣṇa. The institutional rubber-stamping of *guru* as well as the recurrently observed herding of unsuspecting fledgling devotional candidates into institutionally endorsed liaison with chic-awash, locally lionized, ecclesiastically rubber-stamped *guru* figure-heads simply boasts of a preposterously overestimated shot at managerially manipulating, governing, or meddling with the entirely independent will of the Absolute. In reality, though, God's will is quite beyond the grip of any theocracy's ostensibly ironclad administrative edicts. Those who are God-sanctioned to get the feet of *sad-guru* will definitely succeed by dint of Providence's inscrutable transcendental system – even without the "aid" of materially concocted religio-legislative contrivances. And, despite all the well-intended precautionary legislation, those not destined to get *sad-guru* in the present life, though associated with one or another preaching organization, will be frustrated time and again, even after repeated futile attempts. Of this there is ample precedence. The shining example of devotees authentically empowered by *kṛṣṇa-śakti* to undeviatingly represent the teachings of the predecessor *ācāryas* will itself suffice to satisfy all institutional requirements. Aspiring *sampradāyic* adherents need only be *siddhāntically* edified and alerted as to the standard

śāstric criteria for ascertaining the fitness of *guru*. That much institutional governance is legitimate. Deviants and imposters will automatically be shunned and fall into disrepute. No amount of artificially imposed ecclesial governance in the matter of *guru* appointment under any clumsy pretext can change for half a hair-breadth the God-sanctioned progress of a *jīva's* sojourn through eternal time. To advocate otherwise on the plea of administrative safeguard and quality-control is to indecorously vaunt one's lack of faith in the inescapable will of the Supreme and the *ācāryas'* actual instructions concerning the principles of disciplic succession.

It is not enough to proficiently engage the unapprised, sub-devotional, ass-like neophytes in preliminary sub-religious purificatory processes. Outwardly epitomizing the strict adherence to rudimentary *vaidhi* devotional codes of conduct alone is not sufficient to qualify anyone as an *ācārya* in the real sense. Certainly the bona fide *bhāgavata-ācārya* has the enormous task of gradually uplifting two-legged animals to a reasonable semblance of religious life, but the onus does not culminate in merely instituting semi-devotional or obligatory devotional regimentation on the foundation of stereotyped external ritualistic formulae. An *ācārya* must have the fitness to elevate the disciple to the pinnacle of ultimate *rāga-māyī* spontaneous devotional perfection. He himself must exemplify the standard of unalloyed devotional perfection as inspirational living proof that the process of *rūpānuga-bhajana* actually works, that transcendence or divine consciousness is practically achievable. A language instructor does not merely teach his students the alphabet. There's also spelling, grammar, composition, style, syntax, and so forth. Similarly, a bona fide *sampradāyic* agent must be competent to offer advanced instruction to further enlighten the more eligible graduate and post-graduate disciples. A disciple could hardly hope to reach the stage of *parā bhakti* for the attainment of life's ultimate objective under a neophyte's or intermediate's insufficient guidance. The velocity of a

disciple's pure devotional progress is an individual affair, contingent upon preexisting and presently acquired types and levels of *śraddhā*. It is not the duty of an *ācārya* to hinder the advancement of a progressive student by insisting upon the latter's exclusive confinement to the regulative principles of *vaidha-sādhana*. With all due respect, *vaidhī bhakti*, being considerably encumbered and constrained under the sway of *aiśvarya-jñāna* (knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's supremacy) and encroached upon by scriptural injunctions together with argument, intellection, analysis, and ascription, is not real *bhakti*. However evolved, it is not *parā bhakti* or *kevala-bhakti* in the real sense. Unless one comes to the platform of *parā bhakti*, one's devotion to *guru* and Kṛṣṇa cannot be considered real. *Vaidhī bhakti* as applied in the context of Rūpānuga Vaiṣṇavism serves only as a threshold to the house of real *bhakti*. It is merely a rudimentary apprenticeship, meant to offer the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* a preliminary footing on the devotional path. It is not that we are to remain indefinitely on the *prākṛta* platform as life-long *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* with no higher superlative devotional idea. *Bhakti* that is characterized by the unconditional endeavor to please Kṛṣṇa, to love Him because His personality is so unlimitedly enchanting and lovable, simply because He is the way He is, the sweetest of all sweets, regardless of whether or not He is, in fact, the Supreme Personality of Godhead – that is real *bhakti*. Real *bhakti*, *parā bhakti*, is none other than *rāga-māyī* spontaneous devotion, and *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti* is unarguably a necessary bridge to the plane of spontaneous *rāga-māyī* realization.

Real *bhakti* is solely the prerogative of the *rāga-bhakta*. Any expression of devotion to *guru* and Kṛṣṇa not based on *rāga* cannot be accepted as a real devotional expression, because the devotion on which the expression is based is not actually real devotion. It is obligatory, fear-impelled ritualistic devotion, which does not lend itself to the natural, free-flowing spontaneous loving attraction of the heart toward the confidential service of Kṛṣṇa and His dearest devotees.

The *ācārya* may graciously hear and accept a neophyte disciple's relatively sincere but rather sentimental childish glorifications to encourage his disciple's gradual devotional progress. Moreover, an aging *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* posing as an intimate associate of the *ācārya* may naturally take pride in nostalgically reminiscing about the *guru's* past inter-personal dealings, as far as a tenaciously life-long neophyte's paltry perception of reality permits. Yet unless and until one comes to the pure cognition of one's ultimate internal *rāga-māyī* relationship with *sad-guru*, in consonance with the intrinsic *nitya-dharma* of the soul as an eternal denizen of Vraja-dhāma, any air of allegiance to or appreciation of the *ācārya*, the *ācārya-paramparā*, or the *ācārya's sampradāyic* legacy must be considered relatively petty, shallow, or superficial. As such, apart from the unalloyed devotee established on the platform of *parā bhakti* or real, spontaneous *rāga-māyī* devotion, no one would be accepted as a perfect and complete *siddhāntically* comprehensive and very real representative of the Rūpānuga-sampradāya. Delineation of the principles of *vaidhī bhakti* constitutes merely a tiny fraction of Śrī Caitanya's teachings. If one does not pursue the path of real devotion, *rāga-bhakti*, and if one does not purposely endeavor in the course of one's preaching to encourage others to surpass the *kaniṣṭha* stage, to upgrade to the path of *rāga-bhakti*, then it cannot be said that one is viably representing the tenets of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya. To genuinely represent the Gauḍīya-sampradāya as per the principles of *rūpānuga-dharma*, one must, through the process of extensive hearing about Kṛṣṇa's *vraja-līlās* and all relevant topics, from the stage of *śravaṇa-daśā*, first allow oneself to become attracted to the sweetest prospect of realizing an intimate relationship with Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa. Then, with intense greed, great enthusiasm, strong conviction, and one-pointed determination, one must, following one's own intrinsic inclination toward one of the *vraja-bhāvas*, transcend the conditional, *vidhi*-dependent *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra* and come to the position of firmly embracing the principles of *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti* from the stage

of acceptance (*varaṇa-daśā*) in the *madhyama-adhikāra*. By deep internal cultivation, characterized by intensified hearing, chanting, and increasingly constant recollection of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's names, forms, qualities, and pastimes, one can verily gain the appropriate *rāga-māyī-bhāva* as one's *sādhya* (*āpana-daśā*). Then, as a *bhāvuka* or *premika mahā-bhāgavata*, from the realized position, having attained the desired outcome (*sādhya*), namely spontaneous loving devotion based on *rāga* or attraction to the beauty and sweetness of Kṛṣṇa in His loving dealings with the Vrajavāsīs, one can powerfully propagate the *bhāgavata-siddhānta* in such a way as to positively inspire adequately fortunate conditioned souls to abandon all occupations save and except the cultivation of loving service to the lotus feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on the basis of the attractiveness of the *vraja-līlās* and the superlative nature of the principles of supra-mundane *rāga*. Divine life, the *aprākṛta* stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, can be attained at once, within a second – or one may not attain such a state of existence even after millions of births. It is only a matter of understanding and acceptance. A disciple's pure devotional progress may be greatly expedited or factually obstructed, dependent on the instructor's elevation or lack of elevation along the devotional path. If the neophyte instructors lack the experiential insight required to impart the essential substance of *vraja-bhakti* to their students, what can be said. Circumstances demanding, inexperienced instructors, as per *ācārya-vāṇī*, should without duplicity humbly admit their inability and send their deserving disciples to learn from more elevated Vaiṣṇavas conversant in the science of *vraja-bhakti-rasa*. To say nothing of the true function of various illustrious institutions established on behalf of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya, ultimately, the total material creation is an institution set up simply to directly and indirectly facilitate a few fortunate souls' eventual highest attainment of the *vraja-līlās*. To preach *rāga-marg-bhakti*, the path of *vraja-bhakti-bhajana*, to the world via the *prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is to effectuate the purpose of the entire creation.

If neophyte devotees cannot at least begin to appreciate the elementary example of compassion toward others, as shown by Prahlāda Mahārāja's expressed anxieties for the fools of this external realm, then how could we expect them to fathom the ocean of *premika* compassion abounding in the topmost devotees' transmundane eroticism in the supreme realm of Vraja? Can a kindergarten pupil understand calculus or trigonometry? It is necessary for the externally oriented novices to observe the principle of compassion directed externally toward the realm easily identifiable to them owing to their own horrific experiences of material entanglement. Then it may be possible for them to gradually come to recognize and serve the superlative, internally applied aspect of the same principle, appreciable only from a platform of considerable purification. That is an indispensable part of our basic training. In that sense, for a novice, earnest engagement in the Lord's external preaching mission under rudimentary rules and regulations may certainly function as a prerequisite for future high-grade internal *bhajana*. If, however, one does not intelligently come to the position of meticulously culturing the internal *rāgānuga-bhāva*, then preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness remains for the most part an external affair, a kind of showbottle-ism in the name of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The put-on *saṅkīrtana* smile may appear to be temporarily useful in the matter of eliciting an immediate favorable emotional response from a naive or good-natured audience, but unless one is actually blissful, having achieved the *ānanda-maya* status of *āpana-daśā*, attaining the genuine experience of one's constitutional spiritual *sthāyi-bhāva* as a result of spiritual trance (*samādhi*), one's gimmicky make-show preaching won't effectively generate in others the abundance of *pāramāthika-ruci* required to sustain long-term pure devotional service on the basis of powerfully inculcated spiritual substance. Nor will it directly foster the preacher's own ultimate *premika* absorption in the moods of Vraja.

It is often rabidly sermonized that "Higher than living in Vṛndāvana for one's personal benefit is to leave Vṛndāvana for the benefit of others," the conclusion naturally being "Therefore, get out of Vṛndāvana and PREACH!" Placing the lotus feet of my spiritual master upon my humbled head, I dare to offer a few of my observations in this connection. It should be obvious to any sober-minded devotee that the *ācārya's* instructions to this end stand not so much as a mandate to abandon the Vṛndāvana "comfort zone" but rather more as a directive to abandon the self-centeredness of pursuing one's personal benefit (material or spiritual) while neglecting the practical cultivation of the *ādi-vrajavāsīs'* sublime *para-upakāra* mood of helping others to become spiritually enriched. Once again, it is the attitude, the consciousness more so than the action, that is under scrutiny. Because the endeavor to benefit others is based on a higher selfless devotional mind-set than performance of devotional service simply for one's personal gain, the former, whether done in or out of the *dhāma*, would in principle naturally ascend to a markedly more elevated platform. It would serve us well to remember that our *guru-mahārāja*, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, after having spent nine preparatory years in Vṛndāvana, went out to benefit the people of the western world as a fully self-realized spiritual master; not as a "fake it till you make it" relatively unimpressive, struggling neophytic, superficially polished cyber-preacher, having little if any actual cognition, by way of divine revelation, as to the details regarding his highest potential *vraja-svarūpa*. For the most part, we have seen over the years that many devotees of every rank, for diverse reasons, tend to leave, nay, rather flee from Vṛndāvana, not for powerfully preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, but for pursuing their various personal and extended personal material requirements. I do not prefer to expand very much upon this point, for fear of drastically increasing the bulk of this book. Suffice to say, on account of maintaining sundry gross and subtle

material attachments, one would certainly be deprived of the actual internal experience of the *dhāma* even while physically residing in Vṛndāvana. Would it not then be rather presumptuous to expect that the mere semblance of a devotee, incapable of uttering *śuddha-nāma*, is in any way fit to establish any more than a mere semblance of the Vṛndāvana atmosphere anywhere outside the *dhāma*? Flying and flying around and around the world on the plea of supposedly preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness or managing institutional affairs in and of itself does not necessarily constitute, in the highest sense, "the benefit of others" any more than living in Vṛndāvana necessarily adds up to merely "one's own benefit." Nowhere in the teachings of the *ācāryas* is it suggested that it is impossible to reside in Vṛndāvana for the benefit of others. In fact, real Vṛndāvana life, as exemplified by the Six Gosvāmīs, means to voluntarily accept painstaking austerities in devotional service for the benefit of others. *Nānā-śāstra-vicāraṇaika-nipuṇau sad-dharma-saṁsthāpakau lokānāṁ hita-kāriṇau . . .*

Śāstra has it that fifty percent of a disciple's devotional merit automatically goes to the *guru's* account, even without the disciple's conscious offering. If the disciple consciously sacrifices on behalf of the spiritual master, both the disciple and the *guru* achieve one hundred times the result of the proffered devotional austerities. It would be the *guru's* greatest asset to have serious, hard-working, sacrificial-minded, lazy-intelligent *rūpa-sanātanānuga* disciples serving to reveal the pure cult of Vṛndāvana to the world from the transcendental seat of Vṛndāvana or Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura where the result of such *para-upakāra* preaching work towers a thousand times over and above that which is achieved by the same preaching done anywhere else in the world – for the beneficiaries and benefactors alike. Yes, we should all agree that it is higher to leave Vṛndāvana for the benefit of others than to stay in Vṛndāvana for one's own benefit, but who says Vṛndāvana life is meant to be for one's own benefit? Kṛṣṇa's *gopas* and *gopīs* of Vraja, whose

immaculate selfless moods of devotion we are to emulate, never for a moment consider their own benefit. Their every endeavor is a sacrifice for the service of others – the service of Kṛṣṇa; the service of Rādhā; the service of Her friends and maidservants; and the service of Nanda-Yaśodā, Balarāma-Śrīdhāma-Subāla, Raktaka-Patraka, and the rest. They come to this Earth planet to do the highest good to others by generously attracting the conditioned souls to the beauty and sweetness of their intimate highest *para-upakāra* moods of loving service demonstrated in the course of the *vraja-līlās*. They are not misers; nor are their genuine representatives, coming in disciplic succession.

The simple truth is that achievement of the highest self-sacrificing moods of the Vrajavāsīs, whether done within or beyond the physically manifest boundaries of Vraja-maṇḍala, requires one's meticulous assimilation of their consummate *para-upakāra* loving service attitude. Practical internal solidification of the spirit of that broad-minded, most considerate devotional temper is immensely supported by loud *saṅkīrtana* of Kṛṣṇa's Holy Name. Indeed, favorably assisting the *ācārya's* preaching mission anywhere in the world can certainly help one to get a foothold in the progressive cultivation of the topmost *bhāvas* of Vraja when done with a proper conception of the internal counterpart *vraja-līlā* feature of the externally directed preaching principle. Still, it is not at all wrong to follow Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's advice in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*: "If possible, one should physically reside in Vṛndāvana." Since any devotional service performed in Vṛndāvana yields a thousand times the result, one year of such service would yield the result of the same service done elsewhere for a thousand years. Thus if the average lifespan were taken to be sixty to eighty years, then one year of *para-upakāra*-based pure devotional service done in the *dhāma* would be equivalent to twelve and a half to sixteen plus lifetimes of the same *para-upakāra* devotional service done anywhere else in the world. That is the

extraordinary power of this holiest land of Bhauma Vṛndāvana, as confirmed by the statements of the Gauḍīya *ācāryas*, in particular our Śrīla Prabhupāda. Practicing while physically residing in Vṛndāvana all varieties of favorable internal and external devotional service for the benefit of others is the best way to practically capture the essence of a Vrajavāsī's selfless service attitude. It is the best way to expedite one's progress in the affair of realizing the radiant *para-upakāra* nature of one's own *sthāyi-bhāva* as an eternal resident of Vraja. It is the best way to expedite one's progress in the business of accumulating the heaps and piles of *kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ* mercy-credits in one's transcendental bank account, actually required for directly serving Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *bhauma-līlās* in the *siddha-deha*. It is the best way to expedite one's progress in the matter of gaining the internal qualification required to actually preach from the platform of ultimate perfection. If for any reason one cannot take full advantage of this greatest spiritual facility manifest on Earth by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His purest internal devotees, then taking shelter of the Holy Name (*śuddha-nāma*) while endeavoring to assist Lord Caitanya's Saṅkīrtana Movement wherever one may be, one must endeavor to cultivate feelings of separation from Vṛndāvana, based on intensified desires to attain eternal residence in Vṛndāvana. *Kṛpā kori' koro tāre vṛndāvana-vāsī*. Then one may also gradually augment the purest *para-upakāra* nature of an unalloyed Vrajavāsī or Vrajavāsinī by *guru* and Gaurāṅga's divine grace.

Some fools foolishly foolosophize that performance of the *yuga-dharma* has very little if anything to do with the internal culture of *rāgānuga-bhajana*. They hastily relegate *nāma-saṅkīrtana* to the realm of externals – *saṅkīrtana* being, of course, the business of the masses and mere ordinary *bahiraṅga-bhaktas* (external devotees). Their tendency to do like this, however, simply demonstrates their utter incompetence to reasonably grasp the inner significance of the eternally comprehensive, broad-spectrum *saṅkīrtana* principle

that undoubtedly fosters both external and internal devotional evolvement. They really ought to be embarrassed and ashamed of themselves. *Hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, as well as its extension in the form of transcendental book distribution (*bṛhat-bhāgavata-kīrtana)*, when sincerely and purely done for the Lord's exclusive pleasure, in fact naturally and very easily elicits within the heart of a deeply introspective devotee a profound, indelible impression of the soul's latent constitutional *strī* disposition. One thereby becomes gradually awakened to the pure cognition of the soul's ultimate source and ontological position as a constituent of Śrī Rādhikā (Kṛṣṇa's compassion personified) – as part of the cooperative aspect of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's complete-whole loving game plan. *Strī*, the feminine influence, refers to the principle of expansion. When the *strī* principle is pervertedly reflected in the illusory material dimension, where both so-called males and so-called females are deranged, misled, and corrupted by a false male egoism (*puruṣa-abhimāna*) aberrant to the original constitutional temper of the soul, it manifests as the expansion of a *māyic* "man's" loathsome all-entangling empire of mundane egocentric "enjoyments." The pure spiritual aspect of this *strī* principle, however, exists diversely in all pure constitutional *rasas* (*dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *mādhurya*) proportionate to the degree to which masculine consciousness is discarded in deference to the intensified unalloyed selfless service temperament that extends to the standard of *parakīya-bhāva* where the *strī* dynamic expresses its maximum deliciousness. Serving to blissfully expand the empire of the Lord's satisfaction, Kṛṣṇa's transcendental *strī* enjoyables purposefully entangle Him in the loving network of amorous interpersonal reciprocity on the spiritual platform. Rādhā, Lord Kṛṣṇa's *ādya-śakti*, is known as *mūla-prakṛti*, the original root of all expanded varieties of *prakṛti*, which is intrinsically female, or ontologically the enjoyed aspect of the Absolute. The infinitesimal *jīva* (*para prakṛti*), characteristically possessed of the spiritual *strī* quality

expanded to a minute degree, is designed to in some small way facilitate or help to expand the happiness of the supreme enjoyer, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This supra-mundane *strī* function of the pure soul is most thoroughly fulfilled when the subordinate "she" cooperates to fulfill the purposes of the *strī* empress, Śrī Rādhā, by directly or indirectly serving to transcendentally increase the Lord's variety of enjoyables. Purely conducted *saṅkīrtana* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's all attractive names, forms, qualities, and pastimes facilely enables the practicing devotee to tangibly experience what it is to function in that way, because, through its performance, the devotee, aside from personally pleasing the Lord, naturally serves to expand Kṛṣṇa's pleasure empire by inducing a myriad of souls to come forward to serve Him for His satisfaction. Thus, by performing *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, one becomes scientifically acquainted with the true essence of one's intrinsic *strī* nature, which undoubtedly finds its peak expression in all perfection as a follower of the transcendentally flirtatious damsels of Vraja. Herein lies the sum and substance of the science of self realization. As such, it should be clearly affirmed that *śuddha-nāma-saṅkīrtana* and the perfection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, augmenting *vraja-prema-bhakti-rasa*, go together very well.

The performance of *yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, when inspired by a conscious greed for *vraja-prema*, very powerfully and rewardingly elevates one's *adhikāra* in the matter of attaining the transcendental loving service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *nitya-līlās*. Such *saṅkīrtana*, done in pursuit of the *mādhurya-bhāvas* of the Vrajavāsīs according to one's personal taste (*sva-ruci*) is thus to be accepted as *nija-abhīṣṭa-bhāva-sambandhi* (that which is related to one's desired *sthāyi-bhāva* or constant ecstatic loving mood as a *vraja-gopa* or *gopī*). It is not merely because the physical bodily senses of the *sādhaka-deha* are externally engaged in activities of devotional service that one's actions must be characteristically categorized as *vaidhī bhakti*. Here again, it is the motivation factor,

the internal absorption behind the actions, that establishes the status of one's activities more than anything. When *lobha*, or greed for the ultimate attainment of the moods of Vraja, prompts their performances, both *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name and transcendental book distribution, done purely as *yajña* for the satisfaction of Lord Caitanya, no longer function as *vaidhika* duties. Rather, they ascend to the path of spontaneous loving service and become celebrated as potent constituents of *rāga-bhajana*, bridging the apparent gap between external and internal affairs. At this juncture, it would not be at all superfluous to firmly reiterate that, strictly speaking, the sole objective of the *bhāgavata-mārga* is to seed, germinate, nourish, and fructify *rāgānuga-bhāva*.

With all due respect for the topics under discussion, one should mark with utmost interest that the internally perfected realization of one's eternal spiritual identity (*vraja-svarūpa*), whether achieved by the practice of *antaraṅga-bhakti-bhajana* or by *kṛpā* or by both, would immensely enhance one's preaching proficiency and efficacy. Therefore, it would not at all look well for a resolute pure devotional aspirant to childishly neglect to recognize the intersupportive nature of *saṅkīrtana* and *antaraṅga-vraja-bhakti-bhajana*. In this age, *saṅkīrtana-yajña* is the vital force of inspired *antaraṅga-bhajana*, and conversely, beatified *antaraṅga-vraja-bhakti-bhajana* is the essential dynamic behind superlatively empowered *saṅkīrtana*.

My dear most love-worthy and merciful Rādhā-Śyāmasundara! May the broad-minded, forward-thinking souls evermore respect these deliberations, which are replete with profound concerns for advancing a more progressive culture of *antaraṅga-bhakti* in the lives of Your seriously dedicated *saṅkīrtana* devotees. Please let those essence-seeking, deeply introspective, softhearted individuals who patiently and sincerely read or hear these verbose utterances very soon attain the highest transcendental happiness (*paramānanda*) in the spontaneous loving service of Your lotus feet according to their innermost heart's aspirations.

Third Heartfelt Effusion

Third Heartfelt Effusion

My dear Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara! Crying at the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, one very fallen and destitute soul humbly offers to You the following unrestrained stream of prayerful outpourings for Your kind and considerate audience.

He Rādhe Śyāma! When, by a flood of unprecedented tenderheartedness, will the cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana bestow upon this wretched person the most blessed birth within the cowherd community of Varṣāṇā? When, by the mercy of my beloved *guru,* will I appear as a resplendently delightful young damsel of Vraja? I will never mature beyond the end of my twelfth year and will remain ever intoxicated with luscious freshly blooming *vāma-madhyā* love-fascinations. My bewitching spiritually perfect bodily features and transcendental voluptuousness will lay to shameful waste all the most beauteous and supposedly charming frog-like women of the lower, middle, and upper planetary systems of this cosmic creation! By Your beneficent, divine benediction, the *lakṣmīs* of Vaikuṇṭha, the queens of Dvārakā, the enlightened ladies of Mathurā, and even the *sakhīs* of Vraja-dhāma will highly esteem the irresistible prepossessing pulchritude of my person! My transcendental slender-waisted, nicely hipped figure, the color of creamy golden honey tinged with a rosy hue; my sweet face with deeply charming, dark, *kajjala*-lined doe eyes; my blissfully arched cupid's bow eyebrows, flawlessly flanking the glowing moon-like *tilaka* on my forehead and circumscribed with captivating *kastūrī gopī*-dots; my elegantly raised nose adorned with a chained, honey-pearl nose ring; my luxuriantly soft and smooth rosy cheeks and rapturously sportive, glistening honey-moonbeam playfully smiling cherry lips; my jasmine-entwined, long braided locks of glossy, dark bluish-black softly curling hair, bedecked with clusters of *campaka* flowers and falling nearly to my feet; my deep crimson, splendidly

embroidered, silk-satin *cholī*, bountifully brimming with newly blooming adolescent grace; my iridescent indigo skirt and scarlet diaphanous veil, embellished with ornately embroidered alternating Rādhā-golden and Śyāma-bluish lotuses, which I received from the lotus-bud hands of my tenderhearted mistress, Śrīmatī Anaṅga Mañjarī; and the matchless supra-celestial, sparkling sapphire-studded, golden earrings, *maṅgtika*, necklaces, armlets, chiming bracelets, finger rings, waist-bells, delicately jingling *nūpura* ankle-bells, and toe rings, adorning my graceful limbs; my everything: my heart, my mind, my words and deeds, and my entire existence – all this and everything else about me will be ever absorbed in the mercy-mellows of our eternal reciprocal loving intimacy. Indeed, by the interceding, pity-laden appeal of my beloved *guru*, Your very acceptance of my heartfelt supranatural amorous aspirations and Your mercy glances of profuse grace upon my humble existence will render the entire cosmos along with the powerful controllers of the fourteen worlds utterly subservient to me!

To augment the nuances of paramour love, unlimitedly gracious Pūrṇamāsī-devī will arrange for my marriage to an overconfident, dunderheaded cowherd boy from the village of Yāvaṭa. Though outwardly feigning fidelity toward him, I will not be the least interested in keeping his company and will never ever allow him to defile me or, for that matter, so much as even touch a hair on my delicate body, which I will have dedicated exclusively for the *prema-sevās* of Your pleasure pastimes. While speaking deceptively charming candy-coated blather, I will cheat him and my in-laws at every opportunity, to escape the dungeon of household duties and flee into the forest to faithfully serve Your nectarous *nikuñja-līlās*.

Having been magnetically drawn by the captivating song of the flute, I, deeply immersed in *parakīya-bhāva*, will eternally reside by the beautiful banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa within the skillfully secluded, idyllic, mind-alluring, bliss-pervaded

Vaṁśīvadadānandada Kuñja near the northern *ghāṭa* in the enchanting grove of Śrīmatī Lalitā Devī. My ornately filigreed golden entrance-gate arbor, lusciously entwined with vine-clusters of intoxicatingly fragrant mālatī, juhī, and mādhavī flowers, frequently attended by swarms of intoxicated buzzing bumblebees and butterflies; my splendidly inviting, personally landscaped love-bower, bordered by luxuriant, consecutively coupled, multicolored, sparkling gemstone-like *kalpa-vṛkṣa* trees and spiraling *kalpa-vallī* creepers, concertedly bearing six-seasonal sweet and fragrant fruits and flowers of all description; my enchanting winding garden walkways, glowingly paved with intricately picturesque emerald, ruby, lapis lazuli, crystal, honey-golden onyx, and moonstone mosaics of elaborate supra-celestial leaf, fruit, and flower designs, flanked by thick moss, ferns, and varieties of lush, sweet-scented flower bearing verdure; the adjoining intermittently situated, divinely engraved, tastefully gem-bedecked, comfortably cushioned golden bliss-benches beneath the beautifully bending bows of over-laden *kadamba*, *campaka*, *bakula*, *aśoka*, *pārijāta*, *rādhā-chori*, *kṛṣṇa-chori*, and lovely land lotus trees, graced with adjacent meticulously sculptured elegant crystal swans, magnificent emerald and sapphire peacocks, and unblemished translucent marble supra-delightful, rapturously poised, flirtatiously dancing love-maidens; my privately placed, splendidly domed, black-and-gold onyx garden gazebos, beautified with many flower-creeper-embraced, festively festooned, exquisitely carved ivory-inlaid pillars and arches and replete with varieties of irresistibly engaging pleasure accoutrements such as large and small, multi-colored, super-soft silken pillows, firm, satin-covered love-bolsters, elegantly carved golden pitchers and goblets for supplying refreshing, cool water and ambrosial nectar drinks, as well as jeweled *pān* boxes and moonstone-studded golden spittoons, plus *camara* whisks and large hand-held peacock fans for creating cooling and festive

breezes; my indescribably sweet and attractive, immaculately sculpted *cintāmaṇi* crystalline *kuñja* love-cottage, intimately nestled amidst maze-like, consummately love-inspiring forest-flower-laden courtyards, intriguingly arranged rock gardens, exotic flower gardens, blissful *tulasī* groves, and charming, sweet-scented vineyards continually filled with the symphonic twittering, warbling, cooing, passionate crying, and sweet-talking of many varieties of parrots, mynahs, peacocks, swans, cranes, gulls, doves, pigeons, sparrows, and finches always ecstatically responding to my love-lorn constant singing of Your Holy Names – *He* Rādhe Śyāma, the splendor of my personal abode cannot be suitably described by a mere string of words. When, in the course of Your never-ending love escapades, will You, by Your unlimited kindness, periodically come to see my exquisitely enchanting private *vilāsa-kuñja* as one of Your favorite secret pastime paradises?

He Rādhe Śyāma! When, mercifully coming to grace my delightful love-bower, along with Your dearmost beloved Śrīmatī Anaṅga Mañjarī, who is the goddess of my very life, will the two of You simultaneously, from both sides, embrace me and kiss my cheeks, knowing me and my everything to be Your very own?

He Rādhe Śyāma! When will I be invited into the services of Your eternal eightfold daily pastimes within the all-blissful love-groves of Śrī Vṛndāvana? I will ever-attentively in every way selflessly serve to augment Your absolute delight. Sometimes I will sweep Your pastime-cottage with my long curly locks of hair. Sometimes I will massage Your exquisitely beautiful limbs with fragrant oils, bathe You, dress You in splendid garments, and decorate You with incomparably charming flower ornaments made by me and one or two of my friends, just to see them become mercilessly mutilated by Your reckless ravaging love play. Sometimes I will gently wave a fan of peacock feathers to remove the drops of perspiration produced from the heat of Your heart's

passion for each other. Sometimes I will blissfully offer You varieties of intoxicating honey wine to initiate the jubilation of a million cupids. You will reciprocate by forcibly inducing me to drink as well, after which I will not be able to clearly articulate what Cupid did or did not do to me to enhance the munificent expansion of Your pleasure pastimes. And sometimes, when You are in the mood, You will ask me, Your unworthy maidservant, to sweetly sing from the core of my heart, while playing the *svara-maṇḍalikā-vīṇā* in *rāgas* appropriate to Your delightful *bhāvas*, which naturally accommodate my own desired mood of ever-loving availability.

O *He* Rādhe! When, in Your assembly of *sakhīs*, will I get the chance to see, with my own blooming eyes, incomparably lovely Lalitā Sundarī forcing her way between me and Lord Śyāma while endlessly rebuking Him with the most outrageous, audaciously sarcastic criticisms to prevent Him from capriciously ripping at my upper garments? When will I, my glistening honey-sweet lips slightly smiling, relish, with a love-laden sidelong glance the nectar of His ambrosial, crestfallen face at that time?

And when, in Your smiling presence, by Your incomprehensible kindness, will I ever whisper into His ear, "I love You too!" as Your enchanted, whimsical Śyāma, knowing me to be Yours, passionately embraces me to His heart?

When will I become so blessed as to be in Your company when Your lover prankishly accosts You along a narrow footpath, demanding amorous favors as an excise for Your invaluable loads of carefully concealed bodily beauty?

When, as clouds rumble in the sky, will I, hiding my blissful smile behind the corner of my veil, apprehensively witness the witty way the unreliable Śyāma boatman entreats You to step into His old dilapidated boat on the banks of Mānasa-gaṅgā at the foot of Govardhana Hill?

What uncommon price will the uncommon lecherous gardener demand of me as payment for even the least of His uncommon tree-grown pearls? O Rādhike! Will that day soon come when I will delightfully embrace the moods of the *sakhī*s, who, with clever insistence, forcibly assert Your rulership over the forest of Vṛndā as Your messengers remonstratively demand, at Your behest, a tax on all the produce from Śyāma's newly harvested astonishing garden-crop of pearls?

He Gāndharvike! When will I personally witness Śyāma's indescribably sweet masquerade as Your new *sakhī*, His disguise as a young female snake charmer, His bold intrigue as a distressed demigoddess, His impersonation of Your foolish husband, His emergence as a wild, ferocious beast along the forest path, and His many other guises all donned when circumstantially needed to access Your loving embrace?

When will a certain inconsolable maidservant become happy upon seeing You accept the dress and appearance of Subāla Sakhā to escape Mother Jaṭilā's vigilance? My heart will ever revel in the ecstasy of these pastimes.

He Vrajādhipe Śrī Rādhike! The ambrosial pastimes of Your two delicate lotus feet are an ever-enchanting limitless mercy ocean of sweetness! In this world, the perfected *antaraṅga-bhaktas* standing at its shore are sprinkled with a few mist-drops of the nectar spray from the crashing waves of that ocean. I, fortunately encountering the seaside-breezes coming through the merciful lotus mouths of my beloved *guru* and all the eminent *ācāryas* in disciplic succession, have now become maddened by the mere scent of that ocean's proximity. Not caring for the opinion of others and firmly disallowing anyone or anything to come between me and my ultimate attainment, I, though blinded by tears of intense simultaneous hope and desperation, nevertheless hasten to get a glimpse of that ocean of *premāmṛta*.

He Prāṇeśvarī Rādhe! When oh when will I, with a purest heart, be privileged to selflessly and most intimately serve Your wonderfully enchanting *rāsa* dance pastimes in the company of Your beautiful *sakhīs* and most enchanting *kiṅkarīs*? Sometimes I will play on the *vīṇā*, sometimes I will flutter on the flute, and sometimes I will delightfully sing on the fifth note while blissfully reciprocating Your beaming smiles. Sometimes I will clap my hands or chime the *karatālas* in time with the various rhythmic drums that serve to set the pace. Sometimes, when Your unlimitedly charming younger sister will, on Your indication, prankishly pull frantically protesting me by the hands into the circle of twirling *gopīs* to dance by her side, You will make Your ever devoted Śyāma dance with each of us in turn! When He catches hold of my hands, spins me around, and embraces me by the neck, maddening me with the intoxicating aroma of His avid cupidity for the nectar lips of Your loyal, unalloyed maidservants, at once my tongue will desire to become hundreds of tongues with which to taste the honeydew sweetness of His kisses! My jubilant nose will desire to become thousands of noses with which to relish the ambrosial fragrance of His arms! My eyes will want to become millions of minnows to swim in the nectar ocean of His unfathomable handsomeness! My ears will wish to become billions of goblets with which to quaff the elixir of His fearlessly forward, flirtatious flattery! My two virtuous, budding raised breasts will shamelessly yearn to become a host of freshly blossomed saffron-pollen-besprinkled, honey-laden golden lotus flowers to enrapture His intoxicated-bumblebee-like heroically roaming eyes! My hands will want to expand by the trillions to check His persistent whimsical pinching! My horripilating thighs will urgently require quadrillions of empathetic reinforcements to sustain my all-but-swooning everything! And my mesmerized mind, intelligence, happy heart, and soul will ever remember, honor, and favorably serve, for Your exclusive satisfaction, the shoreless mercy-ocean of the peerless pastimes of Your tender lotus feet!

Dearest Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! When, at the end of Your nocturnal love festival, as I serve to satisfy You with extraordinarily delicious, aromatic *pān*, will You and Your sweet-hearted Śyāma whisper about me into each other's ears, knowing the treasures of Your lotus feet to be the most cherished hope of my heart?

He Rādhe! When, having awakened from this dreamlike conditional material existence, the miserable affectation of male egoism long forgotten, will I find myself automatically rising to smilingly muse upon Your Śyāmasundara's distinctive love marks on my person, still bleary-eyed and languid with fatigue from the previous night's *rāsa* festival? Bewildered by a mixture of lingering loving sentiments, feelings of eternal gratitude, and a stirring awareness of the urgency of my impending morning services, I will happily enter Your *kuñja* wind-palace with a few of my friends to behold the boundless beauty of Your tightly embracing dark and fair sleepy forms.

When will You, hearing our softly arriving tinkling anklets amid the sweet early morning warbling, cooing, and twittering of Vṛndā's waking chorus of many kinds of love-filled birds, my arrival gradually dawning upon Your still drowsy, half-open eyes, sweetly request of me just a few minutes more, anticipating the imminent distress of Your lover's pangs of separation? Then and there I will worship you with an *ārātrika* of ten million glowing smiles!

As the starry firmament slowly fades into the emergence of a new day, I, stealthily returning unnoticed to my in-laws' home, will burn with an overwhelming desire to constantly serve You in a myriad of ways throughout the day and night.

In no time, I will quickly come to assist Your morning bathing and dressing and help adorn your delicate limbs with what I know to be Your favorite, exquisitely fashioned, dazzling sapphire-spangled golden ornaments. After massaging Your delightful figure with exceptionally fragrant seasonal oils and

helping to blissfully shower You with an abundance of refreshing flower-scented water, I will remove Your thin white bathing garment, carefully pat You dry with a luxuriant, soft silk towel, and, at Lalitā-sakhī's behest, gift You with new lavishly lacey undergarments lovingly made by me. I will then carefully dry and comb your long curly tresses and, in the dressing room, as my friends help to tie Your *sarī*, I will, on the pretext of fastening Your jeweled ankle-bells, placing my head beneath Your skirt where no one can notice me secretly kissing the tips of Your sweet and delicate toes, offer my life's breath a million times over in the dust of Your lotus feet. With a happy heart, I will loosely place above Your incomparably gorgeous, shapely buttocks, which captivate the unruly eyes of Your beloved Śyāmasundara, a sweetly tinkling crystal-belled *kiṅkiṇī* belt. As my *priya-sakhīs*, upon my request, place sparkling toe-rings on Your toes, jeweled rings on Your fingers, and many thin, delicately chiming alternating gold and sapphire bracelets on Your wrists, I will adorn Your lovely, pure, plump breasts with heavenly, fragrant *kuṅkuma* and dexterously paint upon them varieties of mind-alluring pictures with *kastūrī* musk. I will place around Your beautiful neck delightful pearl necklaces, a *guñjā-mālā,* a fine and most meritorious garland of *tulasī* leaves, and aromatic garlands of *bela* and *campaka* flowers, all simply to mesmerize the already enamored heart of beloved Śyāma! I will intertwine Your beautiful serpent-like braid with supra-celestial bakula and jasmine strands bearing divine redolence known only to the transcendental forest of Vṛndāvana, and, with a smirky smile, I will intermittently place, wherever possible, the plumes of a peacock, knowing Your mind to be intently absorbed in happy thoughts of Śyāma's embrace.

He Rādhe! Knowing me to be well attuned to the inner ways of Your heart of hearts, You will tenderheartedly beam at me with the sweetest radiance. The sight of this will bring

rippling waves of delightful moonbeam smiles to my *priya-sakhīs*' moon-like faces! When I hold before You a glistening sapphire-framed, highly polished golden mirror, You will see how I so perfectly decorated Your charmingly lovely, rosy-cheeked honey-face with an exquisite honey-pearl nose-ring, dangling dark-blue crystal earrings, and a *kāma-yantra-tilaka*. Noticing Your elegant hair part, marked with crimson mind-alluring *sindūra* pretentiously proclaiming Your faithfulness toward Your so-called husband, You will gently smile, becoming absorbed in the veiled ecstasy of paramour love. With fondness, You will favor how I faultlessly ornamented your crest with an effulgent sapphire-bejeweled *candrika* along with a nicely placed blue-sapphire *maṅgtika*, dangling to border Your curly hairline. You will see how I carefully painted indescribably enchanting *gopī*-dots around the playful cupid's-bow eyebrows adorning Your limitlessly compassionate *kajjala*-lined eyes, and how I placed so perfectly a splendid musk-dot on Your sweet chin. All these will have magnificently embellished the inexhaustible loveliness of Your luxuriant, deep-crimson *sārī* which redoubles Śyāma's insatiable passion to touch You. Beholding the image of Your own boundless beauty, You will all but swoon, wishing to be at once ravished by the infatuated, reddish lotus-petal eyes of Your dark honeybee-like lover whose supreme honey-love goddess is none other than my limitlessly lovable You! Kundavallī will then arrive with a message from Nandagrāma. At that time I will boisterously encourage You to comply with Mother Yaśodā's request that You come quickly to cook for Kṛṣṇa. Hiding my smile when You openly rebuke me for so passionately supporting such a potentially scandalous affair within the earshot of Your superiors, I will again and again offer my undying dedication to the service of Your lotus feet!

He Rādhike! When will my most merciful *guru-rūpa-sakhī*, to whom I evermore owe my everything, invite me to accompany

You and Your impassioned *sakhīs* to the palatial home of Nanda Mahārāja atop lofty Nandīśvara Hill? There, I will help You cook an incredibly sumptuous breakfast love-feast for the pleasure of Śyāmasundara and His cowherd boyfriends. When Mother Yaśodā greets us and requests the *kiṅkarīs* to go to the *bhoga-mandira* to make necessary preparations for Your blissful cooking festival, I will build nicely blazing fires of first-class cedar wood and engage a few of my friends in helping to keep them ablaze. Moving like a fire brand, simultaneously cooking many varieties of tasty dishes, You, being too busy, will instruct me to quickly stir the pot of rich, creamy milk so it doesn't burn. As I am stirring, stirring, and stirring, the milk will suddenly become thick, thicker, and thickest, upon which You will order me to quickly add the pre-measured ground cardamom and rock-candy powder, take the pot off the stove, spread the contents to cool on a marble slab, and roll it all into nectarean, buttery *burfi* balls. I will all the while marvel as You mercifully integrate Your loving milkmaid into Your loving services to Your very own beloved Śyāma!

He Rādhe! After honey-faced Śyāmasundara returns with His friends from milking the cows and is nicely bathed and dressed, He will blissfully sit amidst all the boys and eat the fabulously fragrant breakfast feast, praising the amazing variety of tasty delicacies. Everyone will float on the waves of ever-hungry Madhumaṅgala's unlimitedly humorous wit punctuated by the unabashed, intoxicating *hāsya-rasa* of all the jovial cowherd boys. All the while, Śyāma will search out the glowing golden treasure of Your fairest features through the kitchen window to offer You the nectar of His evocative sidelong glances. At that time I will do everything within my power to mitigate Your acute loving afflictions redoubled by the unfeasibility of intimately meeting with Him in the presence of His mothers and friends, let alone through the kitchen window.

Afterwards, I will relish a little of the ambrosial remnants of His *adharāmṛta-prasāda* personally given to me by Your own munificent hand. Being especially kind upon me, You will take me with You to the prearranged morning rendezvous with Your beloved Śyāma within a cave on Nandīśvara Hill. When, as I fan the two of You in the wake of Your luscious love play, will I shyly lower my smiling face upon hearing Him curiously ask You, "Who made those nectarean, buttery *burfi* balls?" To show special causeless mercy upon Your unworthy, insignificant milkmaid, You will silently tell about me to Your Kṛṣṇa with the indications of Your cupid's bow eyebrows as Your smiling eyes mercifully dance in my direction.

In the late morning, Śyāma will leave His father's house for cow-herding, along with all of His happy, playful *gopa-bālakas*. He, in various ways, will politely persuade His anxious parents to desist from following Him to the forest, just to give His bosom buddies the opportunity to freely frolic with Him to their hearts' content. When will I, greatly anticipating the distresses of Your heart, witness with my own eyes the torment of the whole of Vraja as they tearfully return to their respective homes? I will weep to see You collapse into the arms of Your *sakhīs* as they mercilessly carry You back to the gloom of Mother Jaṭilā's jailhouse abode. I will again and again hear You anxiously beg to be born as a bird so that You may freely fly from the confines of household imprisonment to the company of Your beloved Śyāma. Again and again I will hear Your desperate plea to be reborn as a bamboo to get the opportunity to drink the nectar of His honey-moonbeam smiling kissy-lips by becoming His hand-held playful flute. Again and again You will praise the fortune of His shark-shaped earrings that unabashedly kiss His soft, sweetly shining cheeks. Repeatedly engulfed by intense feelings of separation, You will sardonically eulogize Giri Govardhana as *hari-dāsa-varya*, knowing full well the incomparably superlative

satisfaction Śyāma feels by placing His delicate lotus feet upon the supremely rapturous mountain slopes of Your firm, amatively swollen breasts. Again and again You will beg to become like the river Yamunā, that You might swiftly flow unchecked to the ocean of Śyāma's unfathomable sweetness. You will fervently pray to become a breeze, rushing unhindered to whisk away the fragrance of His person. As You place Your freshly made garland of forest flowers in the hands of Your expert maidservant Tulasī to take to Your beloved, You will flood with a passion to become that very garland placed upon His broad, handsome sapphire chest. Plaintively pining but hardly solaced by the succor of Your *sakhīs*, You will repeatedly languish, longing to become a *mādhavī* creeper whose tender tendrils curl to enclasp the torso of a certain youthful Śyāma *tamāla* tree within a forest bower.

When will we, with renewed enthusiasm and happy hearts, escape the looming prison walls of insufferable separation? On the pretext of accompanying You and Your *sakhīs* to pick flowers for worship of the Sun-god, I will take You to a *saṅketa-kuñja* by the side of Your limitlessly lovely lake. Anxiously anticipating the nectar flood of Your fabulously festive midday pastimes, I will lovingly reflect upon Your amorous delusions as I witness You flirtatiously feigning indifference toward a *tamāla* tree as we hasten along the forest path!

In the suspense of Your lover's imminent arrival, You will see Him everywhere, in all directions. Again and again, restlessly rising up from the edge of Your exquisitely ornamented flower bed within the jewel-bedecked bower-house, You will impatiently gaze from the doorway down the forest path, and again and again You will return to sink in the ever-rising tide of Your desperation to see Him. When will I bathe Your two exquisitely beautiful lotus feet with an incessant flood of tears as You, experiencing a moment as if a millennium, anxiously apprehend the failure of Your now-much-overdue beloved Śyāma's arrival at our prearranged tryst?

Repeatedly imploring You to patiently remain just a few moments longer, I will suddenly notice His rakishly smiling eyes winking at me through the window lattice of the *kuñja* cottage.

"Not so fast, buster! She's our property! Don't touch! We just took so much time and trouble to exquisitely dress and ornament Her and You want to ravage everything in a moment! Do You think You can so freely have our *svāminī* just because You desire Her? I know You! If You want to realize Your wanton wishes, You'll have to pay the price: unswerving loyalty to the service of the dust of Her limitlessly luscious lotus feet! Otherwise, go! Go to Śaibya's friend Candrāvalī! She's easy! Her maidservants will eagerly make all the arrangements!" *He* Rādhe! Boldly asserting the truth of our preeminent proprietary status, I will pull You behind smiling Lalitā, who will stand as a formidable fortress to ensure the intensification of Your pleasure pastimes.

Incorrigible Śyāma, adopting a disdainful demeanor, will scornfully smile and flagrantly demand, "What did she say? Who is this insolent new *kiṅkarī* anyway? Would she stand so valiantly if Kandarpa-rāja forcibly waged war against her charming bodily beauty in a cave of Govardhana Hill? If he ever laid his hands on her, he would definitely teach her a dance or two!" At that instant, I will quickly hide my jubilantly blushing self behind my unlimitedly beautiful You to ensure the intensification of Your pleasure pastimes!

He Rādhike! When inconceivably clever Śyāma, to everyone's astonishment, suddenly eludes the comprehension of all, somehow penetrating our impervious phalanxes to bind You in the stronghold of His tight embrace, I will, on Your indication, stealthily spirit away with His mischievous flute! Śyāma, being mesmerized by the intoxicating fragrance of Your person, will not at all understand what has happened. At that time, I will beseech that best descendant of the bamboos, "O foremost procuress of the wants of He who loosens the hair-braids of the innocent *gopī*

girls of Vraja! O you, who, empowered by our *svāminī*, force the formidable fortresses of their bodices to give way under the sway of their impassioned recollection of His indomitable handsomeness! O you, who, guilty of drinking the ambrosial nectar of the lusty lips of Rādhā's supremely libertine lover boy, wish to escape the discontent of the deer-eyed *gopīs* to whom that nectar actually belongs by returning the stolen property a thousandfold! O wanton *vaṁśī*, I know you! The next time Śyāma sweetly presses your mouth to His *bimba* fruit lips, in His quest to conquer the pride of the *kiṅkarīs*, please mercifully whisper into His ear how we are burning with the desire to attain Him in the context of our service to our *svāminī*!" I will then secretly slip the *vaṁśī* behind my back to Ananga Mañjarī who will in turn covertly consign it to the custody of Lalitā Devī. *He* Rādhe! You will then, by the strength of Your unblemished honor and reputation as a chaste housewife, manage to free Yourself after a little struggle. Glancing in all directions, You will sternly admonish all of the *sakhīs* with Your tightly knitted eyebrows while earnestly endeavoring to retie the loosened sash about Your trembling hips.

As entranced Śyāma playfully approaches and dexterously catches the corner of Your sari, You will coyly smile while looking askance, frowning Your restless, cupid's-bow-like eyebrows. Your soft, doe-like eyes will ambivalently rejoice and brim with tears. Your lusciously quivering *bimba* fruit lips will reveal Your intense inner joy. While strenuously struggling to resist the ambush of His brazenly adventurous fingers, You will outwardly reproach Your lover by lightly bopping Him on the head with the play lotus in Your delicate hand. "Don't touch me! We've just bathed for our worship of the Sun-god! How will our offerings be suitable if we are sullied by a rapacious rake like You?" When will I be so privileged with this sight of Your sweetest *kila-kincita* and *kuṭṭamita* moods, which profoundly delight Śyāma with an indescribable happiness millions of times over and above the bliss He obtains from complete union?

He Svāminī Rādhe! Just then, Vṛndā Devī, smiling to see the fun, will intervene, saying to You both, "Hey You two *rasika* lovers! The *abhijita-muhūrta* is quickly approaching! Best we not waste these auspicious moments with any unnecessary quarreling! If You want to soundly succeed in the consummation of King Cupid's loving game plan, then quickly come with all of Your *sakhīs* to see the beauty of the monsoon forest! This forest is complimented by the jubilant dancing of many peacocks and is specially arrayed with a myriad of swings. These swings were just now fabulously decorated for the pleasure of Your eyes and the happiness of Your hearts by my expert *vana-devī* maidservants!"

At that time, You, being so petitioned, will relent and sweetly consent to happily traverse the dark monsoon-cloud-shaded forest path with Your arms about Your glorious dark monsoon-cloud-shaded lover. Eagerly intent upon climbing onto the best of all swings with His best of all transcendental sweethearts, Ghanaśyāma will fill our hearts with ever-expanding transcendental bliss as He fills Your sweet ears with the ambrosial nectar of His flirtatious joking words.

When will I beam with pride as I shower Your splendidly rapturous dark and fair forms with fine, multi-colored, supremely fragrant flower petals as the *sakhīs* begin to sing and push Your swing? Softly rumbling to congratulate You, the jubilant cloud friends of Kṛṣṇa will momentarily sprinkle tiny rain droplets upon You to bring a cool exhilaration upon Your ecstatic swing festival! You and Your beloved, looking like incomparably pleasing lightning within a boundlessly beauteous monsoon cloud, will swing higher and higher as if to benevolently befriend the clouds and lightning in the sky!

That delightful day will certainly come when I will personally witness the overpowering magnitude of Your matchless, divine generosity toward Your multitude of happy girlfriends. Blissfully sharing Your loving Śyāma with Your most trusted confidantes,

You will gradually make all of them intimately sit with Him on various forest-flower-decorated love-swings! All glories to Your ever-expanding transcendental passion for tenderly reciprocating the love of Your fully surrendered friends and maidservants!

Vṛndā will then come to You and secretly whisper something into Your ear. As I see a slightly mischievous smile appear on Your face, a blissful curiosity will flood my heart.

He Rādhe! Still dizzy from so much exuberant swinging, everyone will slowly wander with You along the forest path into a charming spring-flower-filled meadow. There sweetly singing birds will be warbling in *rāgas* befitting the festival of spring. Jubilantly smiling and agitated by rippling waves of *prema*, the *sakhīs* will spontaneously compose complimentary Kṛṣṇa love-anthems in the *vasanta-rāga*. Vṛndā's *vana-devīs* will then present before You an amazing array of implements to fittingly stimulate Your forever famous *holi* pastimes with Your beloved Śyāma. Before You will lay a large variety of delicate powder balls of fragrant *kuṅkuma, candana,* camphor, saffron, turmeric, and various flower pollens. There will also be excellent forest-flower-bedecked bows with quivered flower arrows. Broadly smiling, we will see exquisitely ornamented jewel syringes for spraying assorted scented fluids produced from *aguru*, musk, *candana*, mud, and juices pressed from varieties of highly fragrant flowers. All these substances will excitedly wait in splendid gold-and-sapphire water pots.

Seeing all this, valorous Śyāma will exclaim, "Aho! What is this? How is it that Mādhava, the spring season, directly follows the monsoon season out of sequence? O Mādhavī Rādhe! I think it could only be because Your heart's passion for conquering the kingdom of Mādhava has emerged as this delightful springtime meadow replete with this formidable arsenal of superbly suggestive flower-power weaponry! Certainly there could be no explanation beyond this! Do all of Your wanton desires so aggressively appear as incontestable reality? O proud young lady with roguish eyes!

Chivalrous warriors do not speak much but rather prove their prowess by courageous deeds! If You think Yourself heroic enough to withstand the onslaught of My flower bombs upon Your devastating beauty, then, armed with coquettish glances, stand and fight!"

Glancing confidently from the corners of Your unconquerably gorgeous *kajjala*-lined eyes, You will boldly counter, "*Bho* bombastically boastful *brahmacārī*! It appears that it is You who are doing all the superfluous chatter! Enough of this small talk! We will see how You maintain Your equilibrium and sense control when You are totally demoralized and devastated by the indomitable bodily splendor of My *sakhī* soldiers and *mañjarī* bodyguards!" At that, we will all quickly change into thin white garments suitable for the occasion. Then Your *holi* love-assault will commence in earnest!

He Rādhe! When will I have the blessed opportunity to supply You with Your desired weaponry as You smilingly pelt Śyāma's unlimitedly handsome chest with powder balls of *sindūra* and *gulāla*? The *sakhīs* will all simultaneously reciprocate Śyāma's continuous streams of colored juices by blissfully pulverizing Him from all directions with a barrage of colorful powder balls!

Some very fortunate girls will immerse themselves in the nectar of transcendental musical accompaniment, delightedly singing and playing varieties of stringed *vīnas* such as *kacchapī, vicitra, rudra, svara-maṇḍalikā*, and *tampura*. Others will blissfully play on various kinds of flutes, *shenais,* and *nāgasiṁhas,* creating an inestimable exhilaration. Still others, with amazing dexterity and potency, will zealously play different *mṛdaṅgas*, *pakawajas*, *ḍamarus*, and *nāgara* drums in many varieties of complex rhythms, together with various bells, chimes, gongs, and *karatālas*, all periodically combining to make an incredibly tumultuous musical uproar!

As multi-colored powders flying in all directions cloud the swirling air with a dense, colorific confusion, triumphant Śyāma,

revolving with great alacrity like a blazing firebrand, will appear before each overwhelmed *sakhī*, besmearing one girl's face, another's breasts, and still another's beautiful belly! Embracing one happy girl to His heart, catching another girl's braids, holding another's hands, drinking another's nectarean kisses, and pinching yet another's buttocks while biting her neck – in this way, Your *svayaṁ-rūpa* Gokulānanda Śyāmasundara will blissfully befriend each and every one of us by the sway of Your ever-resplendent, totally triumphal munificence!

When the colorful clouds of *ānanda* dissipate somewhat, Vṛndā and Her *vana-devīs* will approach to offer varieties of refreshing nectar drinks. Śyāma will then take You by the hand to a private garden, and the selfless *sakhīs*, intoxicated with the ecstasies of their own amorous afflictions, will stumble off into their various individual *kuñjas*.

My dear slender-waisted Rādhārāṇī! I have heard from the lips of great saintly persons that Your honey-moon-faced rakish lover, Śyāmasundara, has expanded His innumerable energies through His various agents to manifest all the spiritual and material worlds, intelligently accommodating the various desires and attitudes of unlimited varieties of living entities. Is that really so very wondrous? All the *vibhūtis* of the entire cosmic creation are said to have sprung from a mere spark of His splendor! Am I supposed to be very much impressed? So what if daily He skillfully killed so many terrible *rākṣasa* demons, liberating them by merging them into His Brahman effulgence! Was His bewildering Lord Brahmā by expanding into duplicate forms of thousands of cowherd boys and calves truly a display of His mystic opulence? Was His exhaustive dancing on the hooded heads of Kāliya-nāga really very artistic or graceful? Perhaps if He at that time would have invited You and Your friends on board for *rāsa* dancing, I would be somewhat appeased. I have heard of His having devoured devastating forest fires in His childhood, but what

about the now-raging fires of our desires to see His sumptuous, supramundane, confidential *prema-keli* union with You? Some people might think His instructing the wives of the *yājñika-brāhmaṇas* to return home to their husbands and patiently wait for some future opportunity a most noble and noteworthy display of *kṛpā*. Is it really so wonderful or important that He defied unduly puffed-up Indra-deva by easily holding up Govardhana Hill with just the single pinky of His left hand? Couldn't He recognize any worthier mountains (mountain-like breasts) to uphold in this land of Vraja? I dare say He would not ably do the needful in this regard without the arduous exploits of all the fingers on both His hands! He may have been able to somehow lift a little mushroom like Giri Govardhana, but how, under the present circumstances, will He be able to lift the weighty *vāma-giri* mountain of Your unrelenting contrariness? I have heard that in His previous life as Raghupati Rāmacandra He wrathfully killed Rāvaṇa, supposedly to give protection to Sītā Devī. Soon after, however, He insensitively banished Her to the forest, giving Her unlimited distress merely for the fame and namesake of His Raghu dynasty. Were these deeds really so commendable or considerate? How glorious was His ungrateful arrest of Bali Mahārāja or His confining him to the prison of his palace in the netherworlds? Bali had given to Him everything in the three words, including his own person, yet Kṛṣṇa, as Vāmanadeva, in return, only rewarded him with a mere post-dated position as an insignificant Indra. By that are we to think Him very high-minded and magnanimous? How heroic was His deliverance of the elephant Gajendra from the crocodile-jaws of all-devouring death? How victorious was He when dismantling the insignificant wasp Hiraṇyakaśipu or when dealing a death blow upon the demon Hiraṇyākṣa while delivering Mother Earth from the depths of the Garbhodaka Ocean? Let Him now consider the crocodile of all-devouring time upon us, as if we have any more of this fleeting afternoon

to waste! Let Him, upon a charming plush flower bed within a secluded, ornately gilded *kuñja* cottage, victoriously dismantle the hair-knot of Your loving anguish in a raging battle against Your tantalizing feigned belligerence! Let Him, dealing a death blow to the pride of the most liberal lovers in the three worlds, most mercifully deliver You from the fathomless depths of Your vast ocean of confidential *kāmarūpā* desperations to please Him in every way!

He Rādhe! Only when I see Him carefully placing the tender arches of Your delicate lotus feet upon the contours of His blissfully shining cheeks, kissing them with His quivering coppery lips as streams of tears glide down from His half-closed all-alluring lotus eyes, will I consider Him to be even a little intelligent! *He* Priyeśvarī! Śyāma is known as *bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam*, the ornament of all ornaments. His ornaments are beautified by dint of their being worn by or associated with Him, the best of all ornaments. Yet, He alone, with or without ornaments, is not particularly beautiful. Only when He humbly begs to become Your faithful *puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa*, to selflessly ornament (be beautified by) Your matchlessly elegant and splendorous lovely limbs, will He meritoriously attain the apex of magnificence! Only when I see Him totally overwhelmed and defeated by the intensity of Your lavishly luscious loving ecstasy – unconscious, fainted beneath Your bountiful bosom – will I consider Him to be at all heroic or skillful! All glories to Your solitary love play within the bumble-bee-bedecked, blossoming bowers of Vṛndāvana! *He* Svādhīna-bhartṛke Rādhe! Only when I see Him afterwards, at Your beck and call, deliriously enraptured and amorously turbulent, unsuccessfully attempting, with uncontrollably trembling hand, to repaint the smudged *kastūrī* pictures I previously painted on Your pleasingly plump and beautiful mind-bewitching breast, will I consider Him to be at all graceful or artistic! Only when I see Him, upon Your order begging to become the surrendered servant of Your unalloyed maidservants,

taking the dust of their feet upon His head, will I know Him to be very opulent and fortunate! Such are the winsome ways of Your immaculately selfless, love-fascinations! I will attain the pinnacle of bliss upon witnessing Your peerless pride and joy as You lay Your own dearly beloved Śyāmasundara to rest by the side of she who is dearer to You than Your own life's breath, Your darling, most treasured, incomparably delicate younger sister, Śrīmatī Anaṅga Mañjarī. At that time, Rūpa Mañjarī, Rati Mañjarī, Rasa Mañjarī, Maṇi Mañjarī, and Guṇa Mañjarī along with their associates will come to her supremely opulent Anaṅgāmbuja Padma-mandira, eminently ornamenting the heart of Your love-saturated lake to lovingly serve her lotus feet. I offer my heart billions of times over in the dust of her lotus feet! When will I attain even a dust particle of her eternal loving service? In this way I will surely become especially dear to You. This is the most cherished aspiration of my heart! In reality, I have no other. Understanding this, You will always arrange what is best for me. That is my firm conviction.

He Prāṇeśvarī! After some time, all of the *sakhīs* will then gradually arrive from their various *kuñjas*, having in their own ways satisfied the Lord of their honeyed hearts. While either shyly smiling or overtly scowling, endeavoring to cover the many symbolic inscriptions of Cupid upon their enchanting loveliness, they will delight You and beloved Śyāma with an exchange of many joking words indirectly insinuating the depths of their intimacy with Him! Meanwhile, playfully preoccupied Śyāma will suddenly remember . . . and reaching to check His cummerbund and looking here and there, He will discover the absence of His . . . "Whe . . . Where is My . . . When did My . . . Who . . . Who stole My flute?!"

I will inwardly delight to see His nonplussed astonishment at that time.

He Rādhe! In a demanding mode, Śyāma will search here and there, leaving no *gopī* unturned until He notices me fearfully glancing toward You for protection!

"I . . . I . . . I didn't take it! I swear to God, I didn't!"

"Well, who took it then?!"

"O Śyāmasundara! I'm just an insignificant maidservant who has no separate interest than the interest of my mistresses! Why do You think the peerless Housewives of Vraja would want to steal Your useless, old fault-filled flute anyway? We wouldn't condescend to even look askance at Your flute! Even if we were sneak thieves, as You surmise, do You think there are no better things to steal in this forest than Your inconsiderate, degenerate, hypocritical and shameless ol' flute? O ravager of innocent women! Rūpa Mañjarī is right! It was most probably You who purposely stole Your own flute, just to have an excuse to give us all unlimited trouble! That's precisely what I think too!"

"Sure, I believe you! You can say whatever you like, but don't think I'm such a fool that I couldn't notice Your fascinating fearful countenance!" Saying this, Śyāma, playing the part of a police inspector, will mercilessly arrest me in His snake-noose-like arms! As He relentlessly frisks every nook and cranny of my helpless, horripilating person, I will revel in the enchantment of Your beaming smile.

At that interval, Lalitā will "Crack!" break the flute and "Splash!" throw it in the *kuṇḍa*, exhorting, "*Aré* Mr. Womanizing Policeman! There is no use wasting time looking for Your wanton flute in that way. She who actually inspires all of these blissful pastimes challenges You to a water war within the nectar waters of Her limitlessly enchanting lake. If You can valiantly conquer the irresistible kingdom of Her unfathomable beauty and matchless skill in conjugal affairs as She sports amidst Her lotus-like lady friends within the blissful waters of Her lotus-filled *kuṇḍa*, then only will we consider the purpose of the flute and all Your gallant aggressions to have been served!"

Hearing these daring words of Lalitā-sakhī and considering them reasonable, beloved Śyāma will relinquish His previous

pursuits and nobly accept the challenge. He will then cheerfully proceed along with You and all the *sakhīs* to the ornately bejeweled banks of Your incomparable liquid-*prema*-filled Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

He Rādhe! When will that happy day come when, by some unimaginable good fortune, I will be so blessed to have even the slightest opportunity to serve Your splashingly effervescent Rādhā-kuṇḍa water-warring pastimes? After promptly helping You and some of Your *priya-sakhīs* prepare for battle, I will blissfully stand with a few of my friends on the steps of a gorgeously engraved sapphire bathing *ghāta*. There we will clearly witness the unsurpassed delight of Your beloved Śyāma as He enters the crystal-clear waters like an unruly elephant encircled by His elated she-elephant *gopī* love-mates. The rippling reflections of the glowing *gopīs*' goldenness will mingle with the reflected bluishness of resplendent Śyāma, generating within the water's waves a mesmerizing emerald greenness to immerse the minds of all the onlooking *gopīs* at the water's edge.

"Is He a dark *rasa*-filled rain cloud floating on the *rasa*-filled waves of transcendental enchantment within Your blissful *rasa*-filled splendorous reservoir of ambrosial ever-increasing playfulness amidst the fickle lightning-flash *gopī* embodiments of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*? Is He a boundlessly beautiful bouquet of blissfully bluish lotus flowers, brazenly breasting the onslaught of unabashedly blossoming lotus-like water-warring golden *gopī* goddesses? Is He an autumnal moon, descending from the heavens in the middle of the day to boldly plunder the pride of the *cakravāka*-like floating breasts of His enthralled, charmingly contrary, strenuously resisting, honey-moon-faced delightful *sakhī* sweethearts?"

Excitedly musing in this way, I will blissfully behold the inconceivable, all-attractive playfulness and handsomeness of beloved Śyāma as He expands His beauty in an attempt to forcibly subjugate the sweetness of His countless *sakhī* combatants while

simultaneously assailing each one of them with reciprocal volleys of *prema-rasa*. Amorous Śyāma will wantonly wrestle them hand to hand, chest to breast, neck to neck, cheek to cheek, mouth to mouth, tooth to tooth, and finally, dueling tongue to dueling tongue! In an instant, He will teasingly steal away their wealth of garments and ornaments, allowing His honey-thirsty bumble-bee eyes to madly drink the luscious nectar of each *sakhī*'s eternally resplendent, blissful lotus-like delicate limbs as they coyly retreat to hide amid the multitudes of lilies and lotus flowers.

Lalitā-sakhī, noticing the rising waves of secret amative infatuation splashing the lakeshore of my heart, will glide toward me like a regal swan, and after jokingly showering me with splashes of *premāmṛta*, she will quickly catch the corner of my skirt to playfully pull me in.

"*He* Lalite! Do you want to make all of your girlfriends corrupt like you? Misery loves company!" Frantically laughing and strenuously struggling to free myself from her forceful grip, very much afraid of what Śyāma might do to me if she actually succeeded, I will somehow deftly manage to escape. As I hastily recoil my feet from the peripheral waters of the *kuṇḍa*, laughing Lalitā will heartily splash at me again and again. Anaṅga Mañjarī, knowing my innermost intentions, will lovingly glance upon me with beaming approval.

He Śyāmeśvarī Rādhe! At that time my heart, splashed by waves of amorous amusement, will marvel, "Have the glistening *gopī* goldfishes plunged into a play-pool of ever-increasingly nectarean *śyāma-rasa*, just to become caught in the love-net of their own endless amorous obsessions by the fishermen of Śyāma's ever-enchanting playful glances? Have they now become utterly overwhelmed and captivated by encountering His incessant spirited splashing showers of love-drenched handsome delightfulness? Has Jayaśrī, the glamorously glowing, gorgeously golden goddess of victory, now intervened to totally overwhelm and incapacitate a

mortally mesmerized Śyāma? Has She not victoriously vanquished His every hope of superseding the indomitable preponderance of Her ever-resplendent, ravishingly curvaceous, triumphantly transcendent boundless bodily beauty?"

Preoccupied in this way, I will joyously shower volleys of fragrant flowers to celebrate the ascendancy of vivaciously playful You, my supremely victorious, water-warring *svāminī*! Then, along with Your friends, You will delight in making music by rhythmically slapping the water with Your reddish lotus-like hands. Just as lotus-like *sādhakas*, deeply rooted in the nectar-pool of hearing, chanting, and remembering the *gopī's* pastimes with Your lover, rise to exuberantly dance, celebrating the festival of *saṅkīrtana* with the hope of attaining Your eternal loving service, the happy lotus flowers emerging from Rādhā-kuṇḍa's agitated waves will jubilantly dance to the sway of Your amorous midday pastimes, swaying to and fro as if agitated by an intense desire for the felicitous festival in the tender touch of the lotus petal finger tips of Your Śyāmasundara's lotus-like conjugally clever hands!

He Prāṇeśvarī! When, after witnessing the conclusion of Your blissful water-play, will I be so privileged to catch hold of Your delicate lotus-bud hands to carefully help You up onto a beautifully bejeweled bathing platform near the water's edge? Rati Mañjarī and others will then assist in Your massage and bath. Meanwhile, I, anticipating the confidential flow of Your heart, will, upon Your sweet indication, go to help Rūpa Mañjarī gently anoint and bathe Your all-enchanting lover. Upon quickly bathing and emerging from the nectar mellow waters of Your *kuṇḍa*, my blissful shapely juvenescent features will become all but conspicuous through my dripping thin white bathing-garment. At that time, the sight of my delicate loveliness will, for Your absolute delight, make the unrestrained, roving eyes of Your incomparably handsome Śyāma savor an inspiration ten million

times greater than that which He achieves from the mutual fascination of His pure, supramundane intimate *aṅga-saṅga* with me! Hiding from His view, I will don fresh, thin dry clothes handed to me by one of my friends. We will then all enter an indescribably gorgeous temple of jewels within a grove of *kalpa-vṛkṣa* trees. There I will joyfully help You and the *sakhīs* dress and decorate our beloved Lord Śyāma. We will offer varieties of charming, ornately fashioned flower dresses and ornaments made from various forest flowers, leaves, twigs, and peacock feathers. Beholding His charming features, I will blissfully muse, "How sweet! How cute! How lovable! How irresistible! No wonder She becomes so incredibly impatient!"

He Rādhe! Knowing the flow of my heart, You will indicatively instruct me with the hints of Your assuring, ruthful eyes. At that opportune moment, I, with a happy heart, will shyly present effulgently smiling Śyāmasundara with the new bamboo *vaṁsī* flute I secretly made for Him at home the previous day. With Your beaming consent, He will happily accept. Then, with His lotus eyes blooming, He will cheerfully inspect its excellence, sweetly flutter a few notes to be sure, and carefully tuck it into His flower belt. I will blissfully marvel at how my most merciful You, along with Lalitā-sakhī, so cleverly orchestrated Your sublime *līlās* to incorporate the fulfillment of my own heart's cherished aspiration.

We will then ornament both You and the *sakhīs* with many varieties of gorgeous, intricately designed, sweetly scented flower dresses, anklets, belts, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and *candrikā* crowns. Vṛndā will then invite everyone to assist in serving a superbly sumptuous forest picnic that she has just arranged for Your beloved Śyāmasundara, Subāla, Ujjvala, and two or three other of His most intimate *priya-narma-sakhās*. Ever-hungry Madhumaṅgala will also miraculously appear on the scene just in time to fill his bottomless belly. The *vana-devīs* will bring forth

many varieties of deliciously prepared fruits, roots, and nuts gathered from the forest, and You and all Your girlfriends will carry various milk-sweet preparations brought from home. I will also bring the homemade succulent *gulkanda-laḍḍus* and creamy cashew *burfi*, which I secretly prepared with the hopes that Śyāma may at this time accept and delight in them. I will be overjoyed to see Him happily relish all of our offerings. Thereafter, I will please You and the *sakhīs* by helping to distribute His nectarean *prasāda*. Thus, I will make You once again savor the sweetness of His *adharāmṛta* kisses! As Śyāmasundara and His friends recline on soft, spacious flower beds, resting and relaxing while chewing sweet *tambūla*, You will, out of sweetest loving gratitude toward Your ever-surrendered maidservants, benevolently expand the compass of His compassion by personally sharing the remnants of His mercy-kisses with each and every one of us!

Dear most merciful Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! I will ever attach the desires of my heart, the activities of my perfect spiritual body, my eternal life, the transcendentally situated soul of my very being, my everything, and my all and all to the shoreless nectar-ocean of the pastimes of Your tender lotus feet. By the unfailing influence of Your special causeless mercy upon me, my heart will be ever-increasingly overwhelmed with undeniable, transcendentally passionate loving attraction to the Lord of Your life. Still, I will never, abandoning the consideration of Your ultimate satisfaction, independently endeavor to please Your beloved Śyāma, even if He, in a secluded grove, unceremoniously tries to force Himself upon my frail existence. Śyāma belongs to You, and You, by Your boundless benignity, belong to me. Therefore, Śyāma, bound by Your gracious desire, automatically belongs to me within the context of my loving service to the extended mercy feature of Your pleasure pastimes. Without Your consent, I will not, and therefore cannot, do anything. Taking absolute refuge at Your lotus feet and giving up all egocentric motives, I will do anything

and everything for Your pleasure. You will always be my supreme *svāminī*. My enthusiastic singing of His Holy Names, my earnest glorification and recollection of His form, qualities, and pastimes, my sincere friendships with His devotees, my ardent longing for His occasional encounter, and my acceptance of His mercy upon Your ever-loyal, incorruptible, unalloyed maidservant will be done exclusively with the aim of satisfying You. Instrumentally acting upon Your expressed wishes or, when required, simply doing the needful upon anticipating the flow of Your inner feelings, I will delightfully serve to satisfy the senses of Your laudably libidinous lover! I will do so not so much to mitigate His distress but to relieve the *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī* heartfelt anguish You feel when apprehending the disconsolate condition of His ever-insatiable, transcendentally impassioned heart. *He* Svāminī Rādhe! I will thus have no separate interest apart from Your own. Regardless of whatever deeds I may apparently enact for the pleasure of Śyāma, my *bhāvollāsa-rati* will remain forever intact and immaculate by dint of my heart's constant vicarious absorption in the pleasure of my *yūtheśvārī*. Ultimately, whatever actions I may perform in Kṛṣṇa consciousness will be eternally governed by the satisfaction of my *guru-rūpa-sakhī*.

My dearmost beloved Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! You undoubtedly relish ten million times the happiness of Your own intimate meetings with Śyāma by sharing Him with Your confidential companions! Who can fathom the limits of Your divine inspirations? Moreover, it is a profound truth that Your infinitely indomitable beloved Śyāmasundara derives a special, ineffable bliss by agreeing to be astonishingly overwhelmed and conquered by the love of Your infinitesimal, eternally separated *vibhinnāṁśa* protégée. Therefore, from time to time You are thrilled to facilitate such a variety of happiness in Him. The individual soul's endearing preferential *prema* for Your lotus feet causes Your kindness upon her to increase to the utmost. Actually, it

is her deep love for You and Your amplified *ānanda* expressed as consequent compassion upon her, more than anything, that profoundly impresses Him and forces Him into submission. Thus, some of Your *sakhī-snehādhika kiṅkarīs* will certainly, under special conditions prearranged by You, sometimes agree to meet with Your beloved when wholly convinced of Your absolute delight. In doing so, they never breach Your confidential trust and are thus never deprived of their supremely privileged access to Your most intimate *nikuñja-sevas*. The amplified *ānanda* within Your heart spontaneously inundates their intensely absorbed *tad-bhāvecchātmikā* consciousness. This makes it possible for them, in all circumstances, to relish a pleasure ten million times that which they could ever access by direct *sambhogecchāmayī* association with the Lord. There is nothing very astonishing about that, for they are most affectionately, if not ever exclusively, committed and selflessly surrendered to the happiness of Your heart.

O Rādhike! When oh when, as the *pāśā-khelā* dice board is placed before You, will I happily hear with my own lucky ears Your *sakhīs* jestingly humiliating playful Śyāma by insolently declaring, "This is not the forest for tending cows, playing macho muscle-games, and killing *rākṣasa* demons! This is a brain-game in which the sagacity of skillful persons is tested before an assembly well-versed in erotic affairs!" To my sudden trepidation, the both of You, dice in hand, will then unexpectedly decide to stake me alone as the winner's prize! Shameless Śyāma will cunningly vaunt His farcical triumph, inciting a riotous dispute among the *sakhās* and *sakhīs*. Kundalatā, siding with Him, will advocate on His behalf, prattling so many promiscuous presumptions. In an instant, eminently erudite Nāndīmukhī, famous as Paurṇamāsī's foremost disciple, will push her way to the forefront. Boldly asserting Your obvious upper hand, she will dismiss all opposing arguments with a single retort. She will then promptly pull jubilantly laughing me by the arms to You. Catching the base of

my braid, my unlimitedly merciful *gaṇeśvarī*, Śrīmatī Lalitā Devī, will then force me, whose gladdened heart is already Yours, to surrender my head at Your lotus feet, like a sold-out animal.

He Rādhe! When, as the wagering of the flute, kisses, embraces, ornaments, and clothing intensifies, will I, with great apprehension, hear Vṛndā's panicky messenger parrots suddenly report the nearing of Mother Jaṭilā to the vicinity of the Sūrya-mandira? Being so alerted and helping to quickly change back everyone's clothes and ornaments, I will hastily grab the flower basket and go with You and the *sakhīs* to the temple of the Lord of the day. Śyāma will look so charming, appearing on the scene disguised as a highly intelligent, supremely sense-controlled, gentle *brāhmaṇa* boy. How humorous! When Jaṭilā unsuspectingly accepts Him as Your priest for the now-very-late worship of the sun-god; when she credulously instructs You to wholeheartedly surrender to His lotus feet; when Śyāma pleasingly bewilders her with His outrageously illusive astrological declarations, convincing her of Your "unblemished" fidelity toward Your imbecile eunuch of a so-called husband; when she unwarily beseeches Him to become the permanent priest of her household deity; when greedy, comical Madhumaṅgala rapaciously appropriates the *dakṣiṇā* and sweets upon Śyāma's pompous refusal to accept – how will I be able to contain my insuppressible mirth?

How will I be able to bear the sudden, overwhelming swell of veiled agony within the core of Your heart as You reluctantly traverse the return path to Yāvaṭa? "Has the condensed milk of Her heart's jubilation, sweetened by the ever-enchanting sight of His ever-increasing handsomeness, now curdled at the prospects of virulent *viraha*?" Thus deliberating, I will reel with despair. As we enter the citadel of Your in-laws' home, Your intensely distressful feelings of separation will reach insuperable proportions. How will mere camphor, sandalwood paste, wet lotus stems, and conciliatory chicanery suffice to alleviate the

conflagration consuming Your heart at that time? Only when You become engulfed by the fire of carefully cooking *manohara laḍḍus*, *amṛta keli*, *karpura keli*, *anaṅga gutika*, and other nectarean sweets for Śyāma's supper will You become even a little cooled and pacified. Then, as we return to Your private chamber, You, engladdened and sweetly smiling, will mercifully sit me down on an exquisite couch and, reclining to rest for a little while with Your head upon my lap, softly intimate to me the longings of Your Śyāma-infatuated heart as other maidservants fan You and gently massage Your delicate limbs.

He Rādhe! After we have bathed, dressed, and decorated You nicely for the evening festivities, You will desperately beseech me to mercifully show You the Lord of Your life. When I cheerfully pull You to the top of the *candra-śālikā*, You, anticipating the quickly approaching evening sky, will see the clouds of dust upraised by the hooves of the cows. I will then enthusiastically take You, on some pretext, to a thicket by the side of the path. There You will have the opportunity to exchange in an unseen way profoundly ecstatic, meaningful glances with Your beloved. Śyāma, swaggering like an inebrious elephant, will intoxicate the whole of Vraja as He returns rollicking home from the pastures with His uncountable jovial cowherd boyfriends and cows.

"Is He a lordly elephant parading into Vraja with a host of rapt attendants? I hardly think so, because when have we ever seen an elephant herding a myriad of cows? Is He a *tamāla* tree moving on a pathway between the Gaṅgā and Yamunā? No! It could not be, because *tamāla* trees don't play sweet, mind-alluring songs on the flute, and the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā don't moo like cows and buffaloes! Is He a walking, talking, playful sapphire deity of divine love benedictions? Maybe, but why has this one lost His equilibrium upon glimpsing the sparkling rays of the toenails of Your lotus feet? *He* Kṛśāngi Rādhe! Just once more, see His charm! His jauntily peacock-feathered forest-flower

crown; His *vraja-dhūli*-dusted, sweetly curling locks of hair; His fascinating, sweetly smiling, unlimitedly kissable honey-moon face with gracefully dancing, elongated lotus-petal eyes; His ever-victorious, flirtatiously frolicking cupid's-bow eyebrows; His shark-shaped earrings sweetly swinging alongside His gorgeous glistening cheeks which are splendidly adorned with *candana* and mineral pigments from the slopes of Govardhana Hill – O Rādhe, just see! His handsome lion's neck and beautiful broad shoulders tastefully draped with a flowing reddish-gold silk-chiffon *cādar* and a rope for tying cows; His charming flower-bracelet-bedecked, snake-like reassuring arms with teasingly tender lotus-like hands pressing His new *vaṁsī* flute to His *bimba*-fruit lips; His magnificent Kaustubha-maṇi adorned chest, a desperate, slender-waisted *gopī's* only wish-fulfilling asylum – just see! His lion-waisted torso covered with elegant garlands of *guñjā* and *tulasī* and a swaying *vaijayantī* garland reaching down to His knees; His whirlpool nectar navel drowning the helplessly enraptured hearts of whoever ventures to view; His generous, handsome hips wrapped with a crimson brocade sash; His powerful thighs covered with a glistening golden-yellow *dhotī* hiked-up above His auspiciously visible shanks – just see! Just see and hear His blissfully jingling ankle bells complementing His limitlessly delicate, soft, and gentle lotus feet now traversing the pathway to Vraja! Are the concave arches of those two delightful lotus feet not fittingly contoured to perfectly complement the rotundity of Your two big and beautiful breasts?" Hearing these cheerfully expressed amorous infatuations of mine, intended solely to inspirit Your love-thirsty heart, You will sweetly smile upon Your happy handmaid, all the while eagerly drinking in the ambrosial sweetness of Your home-coming Śyāma from the moistened corners of Your overjoyed eyes.

He Śyāma-priye Rādhe! Upon returning You to Your quarters, I will, on Your tenderhearted command, gather all the various

previously prepared sweets and go along with two or three of my closest friends to Nandālaya. There Mother Yaśodā will be overflowing with maternal affection as she sees her adolescent Śyāmasundara returning the cows to the *gośālā*. With a little persuasion, Śyāma, along with Baṭu and Balarāma, will enter His father's palace for refreshments. At that time I will happily deliver the sweets to Vrajeśvarī and humbly bow before her.

When will that blessed day come when I will be fortunate enough to be mercifully engaged by Yaśodā Mātā to help bathe, dress, and ornament Your beloved Śyāma in the company of her house maidens as she and Mother Rohiṇī return to the kitchen to continue cooking the evening meal? When I massage His limbs with pure nicely scented oil, He, unseen by others, will tug on my veil. In response, I will silently protest by sternly knitting my creeper-like eyebrows. We will then perform His *abhiṣeka* by pouring pleasantly scented Yamunā water from exquisite jeweled pots. When I dry Him off with a soft silken towel, He will secretly pinch my trembling left arm. I will silently ignore Him, as if I didn't notice.

Rādhe! Is the freshly donned, gleaming golden *dhotī* embracing His handsome hips now audaciously posing as a rival of You who yearn to lovingly envelop their pride in the fury of Cupid's erotic embrace? I think Your all-attractive *nāgara* will surely abandon that rival of meager sway in the progress of Your culminating intimacy.

As I fasten His ankle bells, He will mischievously tease me by tugging again and again on my plaited hair. At that time, I, steeped in the remembrance of Your painful separation, will take the opportunity to secretly kiss His lotus feet. *He* Rādhike! When ostensibly dissatisfied Śyāma repeatedly removes my artistically painted *gopī*-dots from around His ever-enchanting lotus-petal eyes, I, flustered, my bodily hairs standing on end, will many times softly appeal to You in restless apprehension.

Just as I finish my perfect final touches, suddenly, to my sheer astonishment, roguishly playful Śyāma, with His two wayward

lotus hands, will shamelessly seize my two firm, freshly blooming breasts! I will skillfully retreat while vociferously rebuking Him, exclaiming, "*Aré!* What are You doing, Śyāma? You know I'm just an insignificant maidservant. I belong to that girl for whom Your avariciousness is actually meant! Without Her permission, You are not allowed to even so much as lay a hand on any of us, so why do You bother Yourself so?"

Beaming broadly, jestingly winking at my shyly smiling friends, and looking just like sweetness personified, cunning Śyāma will rejoin, "Hey *kiṅkarī*! I was just demonstrating to you what I'm going to do to your *svāminī* when we rendezvous this evening. Why are you so upset? I'm not lying. When you return to Her lotus feet, just tell Her everything that has happened."

Just then, as we, like dry scattered leaves blown by a whirlwind, quickly retire from sight, cheerful Nanda Mahārāja and Balarāma will arrive, taking Śyāmasundara to the dining hall for dinner. When will I be blessed with the occasion to blissfully behold the sweet manner with which beloved Śyāma heartily accepts His evening repast? Sumptuously feasting upon and praising the many varieties of tasty delicacies offered to Him at the insistence of Father Nanda, Balarāma, Mother Yaśodā, Rohinī, and other superiors, Śyāma will happily relish the four types of foodstuffs with great gusto.

Finally, the greatly fortunate Yaśodā-mayī will offer all varieties of sweet preparations saying, "O Lālā, happily eat all these delicious sweets prepared by the peerless hands of the daughter of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu and You will live a long, healthy, and happy life!"

He Rādhe! As charming, quintessentially delicious Śyāma begins to taste one of Your succulently delicious *manohara laḍḍus*, He will become suddenly overwhelmed by the indescribably delicious thoughts of Your incomparably delicious form, qualities, and *nikuñja-līlās*. When I see His unexpected

loss of appetite perturbing the mind of His mother; when I notice His love-stricken listlessness, His pretentious muffled belch overtly indicating the conclusion of His meal, and His persistent parents' total inability to persuade Him to eat even a morsel more; and when I see His affectedly cheerful request to retire to His *śayana-mandira* with a few of His intimate friends, I, slightly smiling, will understand everything!

Unseen by others, I will go to learn from Him the venue of our evening tryst. When will that auspicious moment come when I will find Him lying on His spacious bed, His lotus eyes brimming with suppressed tears of fathomless, overwhelming love for You? Seeing His condition, I too will be submerged in a welling stream of love-filled tearfulness as I recall the untold afflictions of Your inconsolably lovelorn heart!

He Rādhe! Receiving the remnants of His repast from the hands of thoughtful Dhaniṣṭhā, I will then return to make You happy by joyfully recounting every detail of what happened at the house of Nanda. I will inform You about Śyāma's proposed tryst; feed You His remnants, His ambrosial *adharāmṛta* kisses; excitedly help to ready You for Your *abhisāra*; and blissfully take You into the night, down a secret forest path to meet the Lord of Your life!

He Śyāmā! The enchanting Śyāma *kastūrī* musk anointing Your unlimitedly beautiful body will stealthily rob Your in-laws of the power to persist with their moral wakefulness! Your stifled anklets will render their notice of Your stealthy departure conspicuous by its sonorous slumber! Your dark bluish-black Śyāma-colored dress; Your deep-Śyāma-blue sapphire ornaments; Your beautiful Śyāma-bluish-black braided hair; the dense, dark, nocturnal Śyāma-expectant forest of Śyāma-bestowing *kalpa-vṛkṣa* trees; the Śyāma-dark current of the Yamunā flowing along the side of Govinda Sthala; and the Śyāma-ness of the moonless *amāvāsyā* night will all envelop You, every step of the way, at every

turn, in inestimably profound, ecstatically exhilarating Śyāma-poignant love fascinations! All glories to Your rapturous, madly Śyāma-anxious evening *abhisāra*! I, assiduously anticipating Your course, will find myself running ahead to carefully brush aside the ominously obstructive brambles and branches along the forest pathway to the *saṅketa-kuñja* palace.

O Rādhe! When will I, overwhelmed with insuperable distress upon seeing Your incessant torrents of tears, overhear the sharp rebukes of Lalitā-sakhī: "Utkaṇṭhitā Sakhī Rādhe! It has been hours since our coming to this hard-hearted forest grove and You still think it wise to wait for Him? You might as well be happy with Your own disappointment! I've told You time and again not to make any more friendships with that bogus blackish boy, but You just don't listen! That nonsense, morally debased, deceitful, debauched cheater-number-one is black not only outside – He's black through and through! No doubt He will show up at the end of this unbearable night, sporting *kajjala* upon His coppery lips, kiss marks on His cheeks and arms, and a host of *candrāvalī* crescent-moon fingernail marks on His chest, along with smudges of *kuṅkuma*, won while gallantly pressing the breast of she who is Your constant competitor! You should angrily take no notice of Him; turn Your face away! Don't be so gullible as to believe any of His lamebrain excuses! And, if You actually want Your ultimate good, don't, even for a moment, abandon the dignity of Your disdainful demeanor!"

Hearing these discouraging words from Your dearest *sakhī* and feeling inconsolably dejected and let down at heart, You will indignantly order me to promptly remove anything and everything that in any way reminds You of unreliable Śyāma! Your Śyāma-blue sapphire ornaments – discarded; Your Śyāma-bluish-black clothes – cast aside; Your enchanting Śyāma-*kastūrī* musk body-unguent – disdainfully wiped away; Your beautiful Śyāma-bluish-black hair – bound up and imprisoned in an

anguish-knot behind Your head; the lovely Śyāma-blue lotuses pushed over Your ears – flung afar wilted – distraught and disappointed! The Śyāma-bluish-sapphire-studded drinking goblets, *pan* boxes, and spittoons – good riddance! Has the removal of the elegantly embroidered Śyāma-dark draperies not revealed the absolute Śyāmishness of the darksome night through the window lattice of the *kuñja* palace? Shall we now not throw away the earlier-thought-to-be-favorable dark's duration? Unable to discard the diminutive remainder of the already irretrievable night and helplessly engulfed in Your inability to forget inconstant Śyāma even for a moment, You will futilely attempt to escape by retreating behind the closed windows of Your Śyāma-darkened eyes! Seeing nothing but Śyāma within and without, exasperated to the point of total devastation, and collapsing, fainted upon Your now withering bed of stemless flowers, Your every attempt will be baffled as You become overwhelmingly sunken in an ocean of Śyāma-blackish oblivion!

He Rādhe! When will I, posted by Rūpa Mañjarī at the pastime palace gate, eyes drowsy with sleeplessness, relentlessly ignore Your lover who, clasping my ankles with His two lotus hands while crying and crying streams of tears upon my feet, blubbers plaintive supplications, wishing to glimpse even the rays of Your effulgently sparkling toenails! At long last, unable to any longer suppress my hot tears of yawning indignation, I will reproach Him mildly, saying, "O Śyāma! What is the use of Your crocodile tears now? The night has already come and gone! When were You ever in Your whole life sincere about anything other than Your own madcap infidelity? She is now peacefully resting and does not want to be disturbed. Your mother is calling You. Just go! It's time to go home and milk the cows!"

My dearmost kindhearted Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī! When, one morning, as the pitiless crimson shafts of sunlight pierce upward through the unsuspecting ruby cloudbanks along the eastern

skyline, will I, upon arriving at the palace of Nanda Mahārāja, see nearby with my own two tear-filled eyes, the flag atop the chariot of Gāndinī's son, Akrūra? How will I, with my scorched existence, protect You from the malevolent grip of imminent providential calamity? How will I have the strength to withstand the weight of Your ineffable desperation? How will I ever have the power to console Your infinitely disconsolate heart?

"When insolent Indra inundated the land of Vraja with torrents of rain and hail, was that not a stroke of unprecedented good fortune? She then had the opportunity to relish His matchless sweetness, beauty, and handsomeness without any distraction as He held up Govardhana Hill continuously for seven days! Is ill-tempered Indra now revenging his defeat by withholding his devastating deluge at this dire hour of need? Why, now, do the hard-hearted cloud friends of Kṛṣṇa not rain torrents of tears to daunt His departure?" Thinking thus, will I not then witness the magnitude of the *gopī's* love as they despondently muddy the ground with their dispirited Sāṁvartaka-cloudburst constant torrents of tears? Will the tender creepers of their hopes of somehow permanently sinking the wheels of the chariot now prepared to at once abscond with the Lord of Your life not bear fruit? Has not the water of Vṛndāvana now become exceedingly salty on account of their perpetual weeping? Are we to believe His cheating words as He cunningly promises His early return? We know what "Just now coming" means in the land of Vraja! "Just now" never comes! Incessantly crying and crying to no avail, I will throw my parched self down before the cruel one to supplicate his mercy upon the denizens of Vraja!

Hā Rādhe! The measure of my everlasting love for You, the outcome of lifetimes of dedicated devotional practices, the consequence of having served and satisfied many spiritual masters, the effect of having progressively evoked the causeless compassion of innumerable Vaiṣṇavas, the result of having

earnestly scrutinized untold volumes of scriptural texts, the ultimate point of my many lifetimes of determined *saṅkīrtana* and transcendental book distribution, the mark of Your matchless mercy upon Your minuscule me, the degree of my highest *prema* – all will be tested by my ability to somehow solace your hopelessly heavy heart as cruel, inconsiderate Akrūra ruthlessly takes Him away. As You stand stunned, robbed of the very life of Your life, like a painted picture of a totally traumatized, inconsolable Rādhā, we will helplessly behold the last traces of the dust clouds upraised by the wheels of the chariot as it quickly departs and disappears toward the precincts of Kaṁsa's capital. *He* Prāṇeśvarī! I will ever consider it my supreme constitutional *dharma* to carefully minister to the heart-rending desperations of my *gopī* mistresses as they, unable to tolerate Śyāmasundara's absence for the mere twinkling of an eye and thus cursing the Creator for designing their bodies with eyelids that blink, become inimitably maddened with severe *su-dūra-pravāsa* feelings of separation in total disappointment upon His leaving the sweetest land of Vraja to reside in the opulent city of Mathurā.

"*Hā* Prāṇa-nātha! *Hā* Priyatama! *Hā* Mādhava! Śyāma! Please return again to the path of My eyes! Out of jealous anger, contrariness, or sheer capriciousness, I would indignantly refuse to see You or would prankishly play hard to get. Taking You for granted, we thought You would always stay with us in Vṛndāvana to enjoy in our company. Now You have forsaken us and gone afar! Only now have we come to fully appreciate the value of a moment of Your company. O Kṛṣṇa! If I could just have back all those priceless moments in which I scornfully denied You, I would never refuse to see You again. Please return to the tear-worn path of My eyes!" *Hā* Rādhe! When will I, hearing You submissively sob these wistful words of utter remorse, be submerged, by the irresistible influence of Your special causeless mercy, in an ocean of ever-swelling waves of *prema* for Your lovelorn lotus feet.

Hā hā Rādhe! Could the young city ladies of Mathurā ever express, in their anxiousness to see Him, a love in any way comparable to the immaculate *kevala-mādhurya-prema* of Your incomparably beauteous *sakhīs* of Vṛndāvana? How *rasika* was His display of mercy toward Kaṁsa's scentless pumpkin flower of a maidservant, Kubjā, anyway? Was His breaking Kaṁsa's sacrificial bow such an act of chivalry? Let us see Him break the all-powerful bow of Cupid, which incessantly pierces our hearts with the painful shafts of *premika* cupidity for His eternal life-long loving service! Kṛṣṇa easily killed the enormous fearsome elephant, Kuvalayāpīḍa, but what about the more than formidable maddened elephants of our excruciating fears of being endlessly downtrodden and neglected by Him? Okay! So He triumphantly killed Kaṁsa, fear of death personified, but how will He kill our dread of the fateful demise threatening our ruthlessly abandoned You, without His penitent return to this land of Vraja?

Hā Rādhe! In the madness of *prema*, I will hear Your mesmerizing *mahā-bhāva*-spirited speeches to the black Kṛṣṇa bee who mischievously poses, incognito, as His own messenger just to savor the delirium of Your piteously impassioned heart! How encouraging were Uddhava's notorious *jñāna-maya* messages, the recollection of which only redoubles our distress? How considerate was Śyāma's drastic decision to further dissociate Himself from us by relocating to His cleverly constructed, far-off island fortress of Dvārakā? How valorous was His kidnapping princess Rukmiṇī from the midst of a few insignificant jackal-like so-called princely men of this world? So what if He miraculously created nine hundred thousand skyscraper palaces within the twinkling of an eye. Was that actually so wondrous and magnificently majestic? Was His simultaneous expansion into sixteen thousand one hundred and eight husbands, one for each of His sixteen thousand one hundred and eight queens, really

so very astonishing? Did He not inimitably expand His original form by the millions to synchronously sport with His millions of *gopī* wives in Your most charming realm of Vraja? His love for the exalted queens of Dvārakā may certainly appear to be very wonderful, but it could never compare with the concentrated amorous intoxication He relished in the company of even the least of Your *vraja-gopī* girlfriends. In this land of Vṛndāvana the supreme prankster, Kṛṣṇa, made His self-willed adolescent shenanigans successful by deftly stealing away the garments of the unmarried *vraja-kumārīs*. Is he now trying to amend His wicked ways by conversely contributing an unlimited measure of sari cloth to protect the dignity of the Pāṇḍavas' queen, Draupadī? I have heard of Śyāma's occasionally condescending to become the humble order-carrier, servant, and messenger of Yudhiṣṭhira. That, in some way, may appear to endow His character with slight dignity and appeal . . . until we reflect upon the pitiable plight of the people of Vraja. All this far-off news sounds so strange and grating to my aching ears that earnestly long to hear the bitter-sweet songs of His now heartlessly abandoned flute!

Rolling on the ground with straw between His teeth, tears flooding His lotus eyes, His peacock-feathered crown fallen in the dust of Vraja, He, fawning in this way, would again and again beg each and every maidservant for the smallest dust particle of service to the dazzling dust of Your delicate foot-soles. O Rādhe! Did He not mean well by all these antics? Was there not even a scrap of sincerity? Will Śyāma not soon reappear to revive the people of Vraja and make You happy with His merciful sidelong glances, sweet love talks, and passionate embraces?

I will never, not even for a moment, accept that our beloved Śyāmasundara is the son of anyone other than Mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja! That He ever left Vṛndāvana to save the lives of His "real" parents, Vasudeva and Devakī, is merely a *māyic* myth, a ruse! That Satyabhāmā and the other thousands of

princesses married by Dvārakā-nātha are really none other than You and the other *gopīs* of Vraja is only so much conciliatory phantasmagoria. How could it be otherwise? For You and all of Your associates ever remain here to decorate this sweetest land of Vraja with Your nectarous pastimes. *He* Rādhe! Neither You nor Your Vrajendranandana Śyāma ever take a single step out from the borders of Vraja-bhūmi! His apparent absence is simply His playfulness, which occasions Him to camouflage Himself against the blackened background of Your loving delusions so as to shroud the whole of Vraja in a Ghanaśyāma monsoon cloud of confusion! Do You think that when Śyāma now exuberantly dances with You at night in the *rāsa-līlā*, it is just a dream? Do You think that when He stands before You with a smirky smile, when He passionately pulls at Your sash of *kiṅkiṇī* bells, when He forcibly folds You into His tight embrace, drinking the ambrosia of Your *bimba*-fruit lips, or when He piquantly plunges into Your nectar pool of amorous deliciousness within a cave on Govardhana Hill, He is just a figment of Your imagination?

He Rādhe! In Your land of Vraja, by the influence of His inscrutable attraction, nectar and poison become indiscernible; meeting and separation are integrally interconvertible, coexisting substantialities. Reality becomes illusion and illusion becomes reality. Stone-like hearts melt, and the softest hearts break to pieces like brittle stone. Wakefulness is taken as dream, whereas one's innermost cherished dreams awaken to tangible existence beyond one's wildest dreams! *He* Karuṇā-mayī Rādhike! Śyāma, in this way, even to this very day, augments the intense loving attachments of the residents of Vraja to the point of sublime supramundane excruciation! You should, please, kindly not blame Him for this, for after all, from the standpoint of His absolute, masculine autocracy, He is unable to factually fathom by direct experience the deep nectar ocean of loving devotion to His lotus feet.

My dear most love-worthy and merciful Rādhā-Śyāmasundara! May the broad-minded, forward-thinking souls evermore respect these deliberations, which are replete with profound concerns for advancing a more progressive culture of *antaraṅga-bhakti* in the lives of Your seriously dedicated *saṅkīrtana* devotees. Please let those essence-seeking, deeply introspective, softhearted individuals who patiently and sincerely read or hear these verbose utterances very soon attain the highest transcendental happiness (*paramānanda*) in the spontaneous loving service of Your lotus feet according to their innermost heart's aspirations.

Fourth Heartfelt Effusion
Pañcarātra
Bhāgavatam
Fame
Power
Beauty
Wealth
Knowledge
Renunciation
Hari
Nāma
Vidhi-mārga
Rāga-mārga
Arcanā
Śrī Guru
Saṅkīrtana
Gaudīya-sampradāya

Hare Kåñëa Hare Kåñëa Kåñëa Kåñëa Hare Hare Hare Räma Hare Räma Räma Räma Hare Hare

Fourth Heartfelt Effusion

My dear Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara! Crying at the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, one very fallen and destitute soul humbly offers to You the following unrestrained stream of prayerful outpourings for Your kind and considerate audience.

He Rādhe! I long to directly witness how delinquent Śyāma repays His unrequited debt to His beloved *gopīs* by donning the various moods and characteristics of His own intensely attracted *rāgātmikā* devotees in His form as Lord Gaurāṅga!

When will I be permitted to personally play a part in the progressive extension of Your *vraja-līlās*, the *audārya* pastimes of my most merciful Nimāi Candra?

Please let me eternally serve, in any small way, the lotus feet of my dearmost beloved Śacī-sūta in the company of the followers of Nitāi and Jāhnavā Mātā. He, the most beautiful of all, more enchanting than millions and billions of cupids, will eternally dance in the core of my heart!

My dear unlimitedly gorgeous Śacī-sūta-sundara! When will Your magnificent Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, headed by Śrī Rūpa, leniently bestow upon this fallen derelict the priceless treasure of loving service to Your *prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana-līlās* in the Nitya-navadvīpa sector of Goloka-dhāma? I will happily serve in any small way to help augment Your blissful relishment of the moods of Vraja throughout the day and night.

I yearn to not only see, but to also get, by Your supremely merciful divine dispensation, the chance to actually participate in Your blissful nocturnal *kīrtanas* at Śrīvāsāṅgana in the company of Your eternal associates. I will ever immerse my ever-youthful anti-material body, mind, voice, and heart in the ever-expanding ocean of Your *prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana* pastimes! Dancing ecstatically

while wearing blissfully chiming ankle bells about my feet, I will at different times play various kinds of *karatālas*, whompers, and gongs to help exhilarate Your heights of *premānanda*! Sometimes I will play on the snakelike *nāgasiṁha* horn or conch shell; other times I will play happily upon the *vaṁśī* flute, joyfully generating a festive mood to encourage Your rapturous dance! At times, I will play on stringed instruments, and occasionally I myself, exhilarated with divine exuberance, will blissfully dance, raising my trembling arms in transcendental delight! At other times, I will again and again roll in the dust of the feet of all the Vaiṣṇavas, profusely crying streams of tears in unbounded happiness! I hope and pray that someday I, at the behest of Your eternal associates, may sweetly sing the Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa for You in a voice overflowing with intoxicating *madhura-rasa*! At that time You will recognize me as Your long lost eternal servitor.

Dear honey-faced dancing Lord of my life! When will that blessed moment arise when, drenching my entire body with torrents of tears gushing from Your incomparably love-laden lotus eyes, You will mercifully enfold my insignificant yet fully love-saturated person into Your most magnanimous bosom? My Śacī-sūta! My Prāṇa-nātha! There is no one more dear to me than You. Let us always stay with each other, through thick and thin, and keep each other company! Please don't deprive me of Your all-delightful association! Please always stay with me and never ever abandon me! Kindly let me always have You and You always have me, and I always dearly love You and You always dearly love me too! I have none other than You! Without You, I have no one! Please don't let anyone, even in a dream, ever take You away from me! May my heart ever recall Your indescribably captivating countenance, Your enchanting gestures, and Your ruthful, reassuring words of love to me in the privacy of my own dreams! Please let me never, even for a moment, ever forget You! Since my beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda revealed to me the enchantment of Your

sublime personality, I have cherished an indelible desire to – in an eternal, unhindered spiritual body – forever serve the dust of Your lotus feet.

Anyway, what need is there for me to further disclose the treasures of my troubled heart? After all, they are almost certainly no more than the overly optimistic self-delusions of a miserable madman, notorious for his eccentric absorption in the dreamland of pensive spiritual delirium. When will all my ungodly *anarthas* flee far away from my rascal mind? For now, in my shamefully fallen, condemned condition of material existence, I am helplessly incarcerated in this vile cesspool of a mortal stool bag, struggling in this world to do any kind of devotional service at all. Practically, in my present state, I have nothing nice to offer. All of my heartfelt hopes and aspirations for eternal loving service to Your *nitya-līlās* in the lands of Navadvīpa and Vraja, as also the verbose utterances burdening the pages of this book, seem to me like so many sky flowers. I have written these words in response to a dream in which Śrīla Prabhupāda moved me to do so. *He* Śacī-sūta! Although I would generally feel disinclined to voice these few inner thoughts and feelings, at his behest I have inspirationally done as was prompted by You from within. It is as if You, like a highway robber, stealthily assailed me along the way, plundering whatever little wealth of words I was carefully keeping to myself, only to haphazardly scatter them over the pages of this book in Your haste to escape my prudent circumspection!

If I could not somehow or other ultimately achieve the fulfillment of all these hopes for divine service, then what would be the meaning of my having joined the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement? What would be the value of my having unassumingly sacrificed by altruistically distributing thousands and thousands of transcendental literatures in the earlier years of my devotional career? What would be the purpose of my having, in my own shameless way, embraced the severe austerities of the renounced

order of life? What would be the sense of my ongoing struggle to loudly sing the Holy Name? What would be the point of my living and dying in the holy land of Vraja? What would be the significance of all these toilsome, long-winded sentences? What would be the sanity of my maintaining all these lofty aspirations? What would be the proof that the Supreme Lord is most merciful to the fallen?

Anyway, my dear Śacī-sūta, under the circumstances I see no option but to remain ever determined to somehow or other serve the mission of my spiritual master, though I am hardly able to do anything very substantial. Even if I never become one of his stalwart "big" book distributors, I could at least try to assist by humbly helping to keep the bathrooms clean. I could help wash the pots or carry out the trash when needed. Then again, I could help by nicely dressing the Deities with plenty of fragrant flowers. Maybe I could even try to lead a *kīrtana* from time to time, or perhaps I could help load the buses with books or help distribute *prasāda* to the devotees and guests, man the shoe room, or anything, recognizing the absolute nature of all varieties of devotional service. At least my lowly insignificance could manage to daily complete a measly sixteen rounds of *hari-nāma-japa*. I regard any "big" or "small" position within the *ācārya's* institution as the post of a menial servant. I consider any "big" or "small" menial service to Your *saṅkīrtana* movement to be tantamount to the exalted service of Rādhā's lotus feet. I pray that my *guru* will kindly see my meager attempts in that light.

I pray to the lotus feet of my beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda that he may forgive my laughably inadequate and sometimes rather blunt statements presented in this small volume. I am most certainly a despicable reprobate of a so-called disciple. I cunningly pretend to be some kind of a devotee just so the illustrious leaders of what now passes as his Hare Kṛṣṇa movement don't kick me out on my ass.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda! Even though I am a contemptible offender and surely don't deserve any consideration, I have no other shelter than the shade of your lotus feet. I am really not at all very much advanced, and I don't have much longer to live within this one miserable, presently flapping dead body. My erstwhile sinful life of material sense gratification was so abdominal! Now the cruel black-snake time factor is mercilessly devouring the feeble remaining span of my mouse-like existence. Yet somehow, by the influence of your graceful words, in spite of everything, an undeniable burning anxiety to attain the lotus feet of supremely handsome and beautiful Lord Kṛṣṇa has surged within my heart – a dwarf hoping to catch the moon. By divine revelation, my internal self-acuity and heartfelt lofty aspirations for spiritual perfection were aroused by you in the course of my resolute endeavors to please you by my pounding performances of *nāma-saṅkīrtana-yajña*. By your special causeless mercy, the fruition of all my deepest desires, in good time, will certainly come to pass.

In a dream, you spoke to me the following profound and particularly meaningful instructions:

> "Actually, Aindra, book distribution is not enough. Our real business is to become *bhajanānandī*; and, by our personal example, try to encourage as many others as possible to also become *bhajanānandī*. Book distribution simply facilitates this."

In a subsequent dream, you spoke to me again:

> "Aindra, I want you to write a book about how to distribute books."

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I really don't know what kind of book you expected your insignificant, unworthy Aindra Dāsa to write. Whether my attempt is brimming with great hope or overshadowed by dire hopelessness I can't really say. Whatever came from the core

of my heart I have submitted with the hopes that you may smile, even if only ever so slightly (or at least not get too mad at me). I pray that my verbose outpourings may in some small way instrumentally serve the purposes of our predecessor *ācāryas*.

I don't expect that many will be interested in troubling themselves to seriously study the contents herein – yet another bundle of pages to impudently clutter the increasing shelves of so many volumes of comparatively greater consequence than my own that we would hardly have time to read in an eventful lifetime. Among the few who make even a cursory attempt to go through this treatise, still fewer may very deeply appreciate or for that matter actually grasp the essence of what I have endeavored to present. How compelling could the words of a minuscule microbe like me be anyway?

In attempting to openly present my own perspective and personal inspirations as I have done, I intend not that the reader necessarily embrace the details of my particular *aprākṛta-bhāva*, given that each individual soul will seek and ultimately realize a unique angle of loving reciprocation with the Lord according to the individual's natural affinity and personal capacity. Rather, the intent is to encourage one to deepen one's own *bhajana* so as to gain an enhanced internal devotional experience of one's own. It is not that divine revelation is beyond the scope of contemporary feasibility. The Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa is as real and responsive today as ever. *Ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham*. "As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly." One should prudently think, "If it can happen to insignificant Aindra Dāsa – if that rascal can do it – anyone can do it! Then what the hell are we waiting for! Let's go for it!"

If, out of fear of being ostracized, I were to ignore my heart's calling to responsibly discuss, for others' benefit, the subject matter expressed in this book, I would consider myself to be a faithless misanthropist, a godless nihilist. I am not unaware of

the inevitability of my words raising a few eyebrows. Still, I have risked writing down these ideas simply with the hope that I may somehow serve to reinforce, augment, or perhaps even catalyze an intensified quest for the ultimate aim of Kṛṣṇa conscious self-discovery among the non-envious. Faithful persons who have a glimmer of greed for the attainment of the realm of Vraja will value this attempt. Let the *jāta-rati* Vaiṣṇavas assess my merits and demerits. Those who are unfit to discuss the substance herein perhaps should avoid going through this book lest they become lamentably confused, contemptuously censorious, or unduly enmeshed in endless shallow argumentation and offense. I really did not write the book for such people.

To the esteemed introspective reader, who has bothered to expend invaluable time and energy to peek into these pages, I offer my humble obeisances again and again. I beg to place before you a few closing words for your kind deliberation.

It is an incontestable matter of fact that the mass distribution of transcendental literatures unfolding the principles of *bhāgavata-dharma* for the propagation of *rāga-bhakti* throughout the world is the number one missionary "business" of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Only a dull-headed ecclesial anthropoid would speciously conclude otherwise. Still, it should be borne in mind that there is really no mundane dichotomy between the essential message of the scriptures so proliferated and the application of the primary methodology promoted by the scriptures themselves, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name. In fact, the main function of any scripture propagated by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* is to convincingly induce the fallen souls to take up the practice of the *yuga-dharma, hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, without doing which, one could hardly expect to make much tangible spiritual progress in this present age. This book also seeks to pointedly propound the same principle. We should always remember that Veda Vyāsa compiled and wrote down the scriptures with a view

to facilitate the less intelligent, fallen people of this Age of Kali, who have relatively short memories and therefore require books as reference material. In previous *yugas*, there was no pressing need for the written word. The *śruti-dharas* upon hearing only once could immediately memorize for life the knowledge disseminated through *guru-paramparā*, which specifically emphasized the appropriate process of self-realization appurtenant to the respective *yuga* circumstantially in progress. Given that scriptural texts were presented specifically for this present Age of Kali, it would be ludicrous to surmise that Vyāsadeva's ultimate conclusion would be in any way divergent from the interest of the *kali-yuga-avatāra*, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in the matter of widespread propagation of the currently appropriate *yuga-dharma*, the congregational singing of the Holy Name. One who with great effort obsequiously goes out to bear the task of transcendental book distribution without recognizing this essential intention of the scriptures is like an ass that, lacking much good sense, simply carries the burden of heavy loads of paper and ink.

In Kali-yuga no other devotional activity supersedes the currently prescribed *yuga-dharma*, *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Indeed, all other *dharmas* and all the various adjunct *aṅgas* of *bhakti* must subordinate themselves to the service of the *yuga-dharma* to be deemed at all conducive, so far as the proper progress of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is concerned. All doings connected with Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement may be accepted as *saṅkīrtana*, or facets of the *saṅkīrtana* principle, to the extent that they factually inspire, promote, and facilitate or at least positively complement direct performances of *yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

Temple Deity worship in this age can be seen as *saṅkīrtana* only when we recognize the Deity's intention that His devotees regularly assemble to satisfy Him by their splendid performances of *yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. The recommended system

of deity installation and also the highest subsequent worship of the Deity in Kali-yuga is undoubtedly the performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, the congregational singing of Kṛṣṇa's Holy Names. We nicely care for the Deity, making all the best arrangements for His pleasure and comfort, simply to inspire Him to remain with us and glance favorably upon our performances of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and thus enjoy in our company. Even if we don't feed Him very nicely, He will still be pleased to stay with us if He sees our keen interest to perform *yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* for His satisfaction. In fact, all regulative temple functions basically aim to induce novice devotional aspirants as well as the general public to systematically associate with the primary devotional process, *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

Sweeping or cleansing the temple can be considered *saṅkīrtana* in that they serve to facilitate the performances of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. No gentleman likes to come to a dirty place. So if the temple is nicely cleansed, people will be happy to congregate there to engage in *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.

Prasāda distribution is useful to the extent that it encourages people to assemble together for the purpose of congregational chanting and dancing with the devotees. When the aroma and enchanting taste of Kṛṣṇa's *prasāda* inspires them to get a taste for chanting the Holy Name, then only has *prasāda* distribution served its highest purpose.

Cow protection is important in human society because the cow gives her milk to increase the human being's finer brain tissues for understanding subtle spiritual values. When that good brain (*su-medhasaḥ*) is used for understanding the importance of performing *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name, for the satisfaction of our *kali-yuga-yajña-puruṣa*, Lord Caitanya, then only can cow protection be said to have served its true domestic function. Otherwise, cow protection in and of itself would remain a relatively mundane affair of very little pure devotional consequence.

Unless all *varṇas* and *āśramas* are aimed at the process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, in pursuit of the highest *nitya-dharma* of the soul, then *varṇāśrama-dharma* could hardly boast an evolved human dignity.

Making babies can be considered as *saṅkīrtana* when the children produced from the coition of the father and mother become fixed up in pure devotional principles by gaining a profound taste for practicing the *dharma* meant for the rescue of all Kali-yuga conditioned souls, namely *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Then the progeny actually does the work of *putras* and *putrīs* by delivering the parents from the hell-hole of material existence to the shelter of the Lord's lotus feet.

Temple management is *saṅkīrtana* to the extent that the managers intelligently recognize the real congregational function of the temple and purposefully do the needful in the matter of favorably fostering prolonged performances of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, both inside the temple and outside as well. The temple must also serve as a base from which *saṅkīrtana* parties go out to publicly propagate the *yuga-dharma*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name.

Book distribution is also *saṅkīrtana*, primarily because it serves to widen the scope for large-scale acceptance of the process of spiritual elevation most recommended in this age, *yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

Institutional administration may also be considered *saṅkīrtana* to the extent that its influence positively motivates the devotees of the *saṅkīrtana* movement to get out of their doldrums and engage their life's energies as much as possible throughout the day and night in the performance of the *yuga-dharma*, *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

Kali-yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana is the *yuga-dharma* for this entire *yuga*, please. Kali-yuga lasts a total of 432,000 years, of which only a mere 5,000 years have passed. The understanding

should be that the process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is applicable to all souls appearing on Earth, particularly in the human form of life, during this entire 432,000-year period. The *yuga* cycles functioning on this planet are not effective on other higher or lower planetary systems. Hence, it is we who have presently appeared on Earth who are expected to take full advantage of the golden *nāma-saṅkīrtana* opportunity for easily going back home, back to Godhead. It is not that hardly any more than 500 years after the Lord and His associates descended to inaugurate the system of sacrifice for this entire age some other scheme should take precedence. If we don't have complete faith in the congregational chanting of the Holy Name, if we have very little taste and attraction for chanting and dancing and are thereby relatively disinterested or diverted to other engagements, leaving ourselves little if any time to seriously take up the religion of the age, if we don't recognize the beauty and value of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and if we are not intent upon practically helping to push forward that most sublime *dharma* emphatically prescribed by Lord Caitanya, then we should simply understand that we are cursed by Yamarāja, that we have not realized the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and that we have not truly comprehended the highest mercy aspect of the Lord's ongoing *audārya-līlā* of preaching the *saṅkīrtana* movement all over the world. The highest mercy aspect of the Lord's ongoing *audārya-līlā* is to elevate fallen conditioned souls to the topmost perfection of relishing eternal spontaneous loving *mādhūrya* service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on the platform of *vraja-prema*. There is no doubt about this. *Golokera prema-dhana, hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana.* Any *goloka-rasa* may be awakened by the performance of *vipralambha-rasa-maya hare-kṛṣṇa-mahā-mantra-saṅkīrtana.* However, as *rāsarāja-mahābhāva* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu mainly descended to this world to freely distribute the supremely nectarean mellow of *rādhā-dāsya*, it should not astonish anyone that *saṅkīrtana* of

the ultimate, matchless *mahā-mantra* – Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare – would primarily appear to distinguishedly stimulate and nourish that *unnatojjvala-vraja-rasa*.

Na māṁ duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante . . . But who are the *mūḍhas*? The term *mūḍha* does not exclusively portray the other guy. As much as we ourselves, like beasts of burden, continue to blunderingly bear the encumbering heaps and piles of corporeal egoism, material attachments, and misconceived notions about the recommended processes by which the ultimate philosophical conclusions of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya's teachings may be practically implemented and realized, that much we ourselves can be considered *mūḍhas*.

nāhaṁ prakāśaḥ sarvasya
yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ
mūḍho 'yaṁ nābhijānāti
loko mām ajam avyayam

"I am not manifest to everyone. Because I am concealed and guarded by My internal deluding potency (*yoga-māyā*), dull-headed ass-like individuals cannot recognize Me as the unborn and inexhaustible Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bg.* 7.25)

Kavirāja Gosvāmī has stated in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi* 17.22), *kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa avatāra*: in this Age of Kali, Kṛṣṇa descends from His eternal abode in the form of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. *Paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ* – it is Śrī Hari-nāma Prabhu who descends to deliver the *sādhus* by augmenting their faith in the process of *saṅkīrtana-yajña* while granting a profound taste for its performance, thus mitigating their pangs of separation. *Vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām* – it is Śrī Hari-nāma who annihilates the demonic *anartha*-congested mentality that generates the unfortunate reluctance, disregard, and sheer disinterest concerning the performance of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. In Kali-yuga,

not to engage one's energies in the performance of *yuga-dharma nāma-saṅkīrtana* can be considered the primary form of irreligion. Whenever and wherever there is a decline in its performance – *yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati* – and a predominant rise in the negligence of such – *abhyutthānam adharmasya* – then, *tadā*, at that time – *dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya* – it is only Śrī Hari-nāma, appearing through the lips of the Lord's pure devotee, who can forcefully restore the *jīvas* to their eternal occupation, *śuddha-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. So also, it is Śrī Hari-nāma who descends to graciously bestow unalloyed love for Himself through the profound culture of *nāma-saṅkīrtana-yajña*. Even so, Kṛṣṇa-nāma reserves the right to either expose or conceal Himself in response to an individual's quality of faith. Regrettably, disoriented neophytes possessed of persistent *mūḍha*-like tendencies do not recognize the true nature of the Holy Name, who, though unborn, inconceivably takes birth from His mother, who takes the form of a pure devotee's tongue. Only a pure devotee can truly experience *śuddha-nāma-ruci*. Yoga-māyā protected Sīta Devī behind her mystic curtain, externally expanding an illusory form of Sīta to delude the demon Rāvana. She facilitated the *gopīs*' escape from their in-laws' vigilance by expanding *māyic* forms of each *gopī* to remain with their so-called husbands. In a similar way, she veils Śrī Hari-nāma Prabhu, allowing those who have yet to become pure devotees to chant a mere semblance of the Holy Name. Only when she hears one's ardent, fully surrendered pure devotional solicitude does she lift her curtain, allowing Him to appear in all His *raso vai saḥ* sweetness within one's heart and on one's tongue. The beginning, middle, and culmination of *śaraṇāgati* (surrender to the Lord's shelter) as a practical expression of one's level of *pāramārthika-śraddhā* are actualized in this age by surrender to the service of the Holy Name (nāma *ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*). One can easily surmount the otherwise insurmountable material influences (*mama māyā duratyayā*) by such surrender (nāma *eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te*). And the prime methodology

for such surrender is the propagation of the current *yuga-dhārma*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name. This truth was profusely demonstrated by Śrī Gaurāṅga throughout His manifest earthly pastimes. The means and the end is the same.

Only *prema-rurukṣu* devotees, who are considerably advanced on the path of pure devotion, can truly understand the power of the Holy Name and the need to wholeheartedly take shelter of the process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana.*

bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya
aham evaṁ-vidho 'rjuna
jñātuṁ draṣṭuṁ ca tattvena
praveṣṭuṁ ca parantapa

"My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devotional service can I [as *nāma-rūpa avatāra*] be understood as I am, standing [dancing] before you [on your tongue], and can thus be seen directly [in the proper light]. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding." (*Bg.* 11.54)

ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ

"No one can understand the transcendental nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, forms, qualities, and pastimes through materially contaminated senses. Only to one who becomes spiritually saturated by engaging the tongue etc. in transcendental service to the Lord is the true nature of His names, forms, qualities, and pastimes revealed." (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.234) Here again, in Kali-yuga, "transcendental service to the Lord" connotes primarily the congregational chanting of His Holy Name.

Unfortunately, ass-like (*bhāra-vāhī*) externally absorbed *kaniṣṭha-bhaktas* of meager spiritual standing, though socially

established through Gauḍīya-religio-institutional affiliation, have very little if any true cognition of the eternality, infallibility, and omnipotence of Kṛṣṇa's self-same names, forms, qualities, and pastimes. Owing to residual sinful reactions, insufficient accumulation of piety in this and previous lifetimes, and a tendency to commit *nāma-aparādha*, they are unable to worship the Holy Name with the determination required to gain much tangible experience of the efficacy of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. On that account, their faith in and concomitant surrender to the direct prosecution of the *yuga-dharma* largely lacks firmness. For want of spiritual insight, they do not clearly ascertain what is and what is not to be done. Their pursuit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness lacks proper prioritization. They disregard scriptural injunctions even while giving lip-service to the importance of following scriptural injunctions. They thus fail to submit to the prescribed process recommended in the scriptures for this age and so give little importance to the practice of congregational chanting and dancing. Hence, their degrees of faithlessness in the matter of congregationally chanting the Holy Name relegate their way of thinking to the domain of assorted *mūḍha*-isms. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* has it that four kinds of faithful neophyte devotees begin the process of devotional surrender with the hope of gaining the Lord's favor – the distressed (*ārtaḥ*), who are to some extent *mukti-kāmī*, hoping to get peace of mind by chanting the semblance of *nāma*; the inquisitive (*jijñāsuḥ*), who are curious about the effects of chanting the Holy Name; the fortune seekers (*artha-arthī*), who are to some extent *bhukti-kāmī*, hoping to fulfill desires for material gain by performing *saṅkīrtana*; and the wise (*jñānī*), who actually know things as they are and dutifully perform *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name with an aspiration to pure devotional progress. All these people are considered to be more or less pious (*sukṛtinaḥ*), eligible for elevation to the *madhyama-adhikāra* through the association of pure devotees. Conversely, there are those of us who, even

though posing as devotees, relentlessly decline to acknowledge the need to intently adhere to the process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. On the pretext of various other devotional engagements and institutional "responsibilities," they platitudinously declare themselves to be exempt from the need to seriously prosecute the *yuga-dhārma*. Due to miserly weakness under the influence of the Lord's deluding potency, they are hard put to see the connection between the *saṅkīrtana* performances and the fulfillment of all material and spiritual exigencies. To the extent that we fail to appreciate and earnestly actualize the propagation of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, residues of the demonic tendencies persist in our hearts. Correspondingly, the terms *duṣkṛtinaḥ*, *mūḍhāḥ*, *narādhamāḥ*, and *māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ* found in the *Gītā* also indicate our own individual and collective devotional deviations and shortcomings. So, who are the *mūḍhas*? We are the *mūḍhas*! Why? Because even though the truth of the importance of prosecuting the *yuga-dharma* as the only viable method by which the goal of life can be practically achieved is staring us in the face, we continue to ignore the obvious and attach ourselves to so many other relatively superfluous strategies. On the plea of various Kṛṣṇa conscious or institutional pursuits, we are primed to die losers, without ever having truly understood or appropriately applied the science of self realization. *Yo vā etad akṣaraṁ gārgy aviditvāsmāl̐ lokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ*. "He is a miserly man who does not solve the problems of life as a human and who thus quits this world like the cats and dogs, without understanding the science of self-realization." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.8.10) This very brief human form of life is a most valuable asset for allaying the tribulations of conditional existence, which revolve around the quest for ultimate happiness. Therefore, one who does not utilize this golden opportunity properly for the achievement of *vraja-prema* via the process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is a miser.

Unless our lives uphold the performance of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the end of all our endeavors will sport like ornaments

on a lifeless aborted fetus or resound with the efficacy of a misfired blank bullet or a dud fire cracker. All other spiritual practices may be considered legitimate to the extent that they actually enhance the performance of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. As much as we engage our time in activities other than *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* or activities other than those that support, inspire, or facilitate the direct performance of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, that much our human form of life may be considered a devotional wasteland. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not Lord Caitanya's *arcana* movement. It is not Lord Caitanya's "kitchen-religion" *prasāda*-distribution movement. Neither is it Lord Caitanya's management-meetings movement, nor is it Lord Caitanya's *varṇāśrama* movement, nor is it a cow-protection movement, nor is it an Āyurvedic movement. It is not Lord Caitanya's money-scamming movement; nor Lord Caitanya's computer-junkie; social-development; community-service; international-matchmaking; child-protection; or eating, sleeping, baby-buggying, and mutual back-scratching or backbiting movement. We would do very well to clearly mark that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement happens to be Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement, please. A movement that does not primarily inspire, promote, and facilitate its members' concerted absorption in *kali-yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is hardly a *saṅkīrtana* movement. Moreover, a *saṅkīrtana* movement that neglects to purposely encourage the pursuit of *rāga-bhajana* for the attainment of *vraja-prema* is not the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In this Kali-yuga, there's no question of pleasing Lord Kṛṣṇa without pleasing Lord Caitanya. Human beings with good brain substance (*su-medhasaḥ*) intelligently recognize that Lord Caitanya is immensely pleased by the *lobha-maya* performance of *sneha-saṁyukta-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. There is no universally viable *dharma* in this age save the congregational chanting of the Holy Name.

To reiterate as well as emphasize a point briefly mentioned in Chapter Two, it should be doubly re-affirmed that in this Age of Kali the success of any other limb of devotional service – not excluding *bhāgavata-śravaṇa-kīrtana*, of which transcendental book distribution (*bṛhat-bhāgavata-kīrtana*) is an extension – largely depends upon one's isochronous absorption in the direct practice of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. It is seen, with reference to *ācārya-vāṇī*, that the most highly elevated, self-surrendering devotees doubtlessly prefer to exclusively embrace the congregational singing of the Holy Name rather than rely on other devotional processes for the evolvement of *prema*. In the *bhakti-śāstras* the efficacy of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is well established above all other *aṅgas* of *bhakti*. *Tāra madhye sarva-śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana. (Cc. Antya* 4.71*)* In fact, *nāma-saṅkīrtana* stands alone as the greatest devotional practice (*mahā-sādhana*) and therefore reigns supreme as the only infallible means of attaining love of Godhead (*vraja-prema*). It is not that other forms of devotional service are as good as *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, but somehow or other *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is really not good enough (financially viable or whatever), obliging us not to highlight its performance in any way. If we are to propose that *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is not good enough to merit our concern, then any engagement allegedly "as good as" *nāma-saṅkīrtana* should also be equally ignored. Beyond that, the proposition that any devotional activity is in any way better than prosecuting the *yuga-dharma* should be deemed sheer madness. Any other *aṅga* of *sādhana-bhakti* deserves to be lauded as *sādhana* only if it in some way facilitates one's active absorption in *nāma-saṅkīrtana-rasa*. Further, any *sādhana* that fails to promote but rather tends to detract from one's progressive attachment to the process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is simply an *anartha*, an impediment on the path of ultimate perfection – even if in the broader sense it is computed to be some sort of *saṅkīrtana*.

As one covets a particular mellow of loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa (*nāmī*), so also one's reciprocal *rasa* in rapport with Hari-nāma will manifest. Kṛṣṇa's name is the living embodiment of all transcendental *rasas* (*caitanya-rasa-vigraha*). As Kṛṣṇa is *bhāva-grāhī janārdana*, so too is Śrī Hari-nāma. The *mādhurya-bhaktas* will cherish a conjugal attitude toward the Holy Name, the *vātsalya-bhaktas* will serve the Holy Name in light of their parental affection, the *sakhya-bhaktas* will befriend the Holy Name as they would their best friend, Kṛṣṇa, and so on. Merciful Śrī Hari-nāma Prabhu will appropriately answer to each individual devotee's unique approach. Knowledge of *vrajendra-nandana-kṛṣṇa-sambandha-tattva*, *vraja-bhakti-abhidheya-tattva*, and *vraja-prema-prayojana-tattva* along with *vraja-līlā-vicāra* and so forth, as taught through the *śāstras*, is essentially required to give proper shape to one's worship of the Holy Name. It is supplementary information, facilitating the flowering of *śuddha-nāma-bhajana* for the unobstructed attainment of one's constitutional internal devotional mood (*bhāva-siddhi*). Although not reliant upon the force of scriptural injunctions, even one prompted by a spiritual greed (*lobha*) for the attainment of the moods of Vraja naturally seeks favorable guidance, inspiration, and nourishment from relevant scriptural information. As stated in the *Bhāgavatam* (11.14.26): "The more one's heart becomes purified by hearing and chanting about My beautiful pastimes, the more one can ably discern the subtle reality of the Absolute Truth (*vastu*). . ." The words *tathā tathā paśyati vastu sūkṣmaṁ* in this *Bhāgavatam* verse are significant in that they refer not only to a proportionately realized perception of the non-material, eternally substantial existence of the absolute, infinite Godhead and His infinite integrated counterpart internal spiritual potencies, but also to the simultaneous, gradual identification of the *svarūpa* of the *sac-cid-ānanda-siddha-deha* (eternal spiritual body) of the integrally existing infinitesimal part-and-parcel living entity.

God-realization and self-realization go hand in hand just as the sun's appearance in the firmament simultaneously facilitates one's seeing both the body of the sun and one's own body. As such, this important instruction spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava undeniably indicates the feasibility of gradual self-discovery (understanding and perfectly realizing one's *vraja-svarūpa*) by internal revelation through the purifying processes of hearing and chanting, without which *vraja-lokānusārataḥ* (following the moods of the Vrajavāsīs) and qualified *līlā-smaraṇa* could hardly be achievable.

Although recognized as a principal feature of *rāgānuga-sādhana*, *līlā-smaraṇa*, particularly in Kali-yuga, is nevertheless inescapably dependent on *kīrtana*. Endeavoring to separately practice *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-smaraṇa* without doing *kīrtana* is simply an inane attempt to besmear oneself with the hog stool of worldly illustriousness before the Vaiṣṇava community. Of all types of *kīrtana* (*nāma, rūpa, guṇa,* and *līlā*), *nāma-kīrtana*, the loud singing of the Holy Name, is said to be primary and most efficacious. Furthermore, among the varieties of *nāma-kīrtana*, Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra-saṅkīrtana* coupled with *vairāgya and vidyā* is highly esteemed as the most potent. The thirty-two-syllable *mahā-mantra* – Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare – is affirmed by the *śāstras* to be the approved *tāraka-brahma kīrtana-mantra* for this present Age of Kali. The *tāraka-brahma kīrtana-mantras* prescribed for the previous *yugas* (Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali-yugas in which *avatāras* other than Lord Caitanya appeared) are *aiśvarya-* or mixed *aiśvarya/mādhurya-maya mantras* bestowing the attainment of the Lord's majestic realms and subordinate *rasas* (up to *vatsālya*) as their fruit. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, however, is a *kevala-mādhurya-maya rādhā-kṛṣṇa-yugala mantra*, which integrates both *tāraka* and *pāraka* potencies, granting to the *lobha-maya-śraddhāvān jana* liberation from material existence and, far beyond that, the sweetest fruit of *vraja-prema*

(culminating in the *mādhurya-rasa*) and the attainment of the eternal realm of Vraja. It is not at all fortuitous that the *tāraka-brahma kīrtana-mantra* corresponding to the present age, in which the most munificent Lord Gaurāṅga advented to broadcast the sweetest of all the *mādhurya* mellows of Vraja (*rādhā-dāsyam*), be absolutely in consonance with the very thrust of His mission. Much stress is therefore given to Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra saṅkīrtana*. In truth, Lord Gaurāṅga (Vrajendranandana Himself), cutting to the point, inaugurated the *yuga-dharma* for the present age, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name (primarily the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*), which, unlike the *dharmas* (*dhyāna*, *yajña*, and *arcana*) established in other *yugas* by Vrajendranandana Kṛṣṇa's expansions, happens to be the highest eternal occupation (*jaiva-dharma*) of the soul, inherently possessed of the capacity to culture the spontaneous *mādhurya* moods of Vraja. In this age everyone, upon invoking the mercy of the Pañca-tattva (*śri-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*) by the grace of *sat-paramparā*, can best access the course of concentrated *vraja-bhakti-bhajana* through the medium of Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra-saṅkīrtana*, which easily and powerfully promotes vibrant, all-round *nāma*, *rūpa*, *guṇa*, and *līlā* absorption in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Nevertheless, unless we progressively perform *mahā-mantra-saṅkīrtana* with proper depth of internal meditation, recognizing the superlative sense of *sambandha-abhideya-prayojana-vicāra* as per *rūpānuga-gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava-siddhānta* while cultivating a greed for attaining the highest *rāga-maya* fruit of one's chanting, then our participation in the *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name will not engender the most desirable outcome. As a husband is the life and soul of his wife (*vadhū*), so *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* performed with a greed to taste the nectar (*vraja-bhakti-rasa*) for which we are always anxious is, in fact, *vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam*, the very life and soul of all transcendental knowledge found in the scriptures. What is the

validity of a wife (*adhyātma-vidyā*) without her husband (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*)? Without the performance of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, no other practices of *bhakti-yoga* such as residence in Mathurā or association with devotees are complete. *Ācārya-vāni* additionally has it that even if we do exclusively *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, we will surely win all the fruits of residence in Mathurā, associating with devotees, serving the deity with loving faith, and listening to the Bhāgavatam. Thus, the preeminence of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is emphasized. Have no doubt about it. Simply through *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, all perfections come to the *jīva*. Those who worship the Lord by the congregational chanting of the Holy Name are most intelligent. As for the rest, they have been defeated by the sway of Kali's clutches. *Sneha-saṁyukta-vraja-prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. We read about it. We (armchair) philosophize about it (to the extent we're able). We distribute millions and billions of books about it. But to what extent are we actually living it? Let us take account; how much of it do we actually do?

Consider another point: although *kṛṣṇa-nāma-rūpa-guṇa-līlā-kathāmṛta* is relished by the Lord's devotees both here and in the spiritual world, any form of preaching to reclaim wayward, corporeally engrossed *jīvas* is only done in this material world, which is sometimes manifested and sometimes not. Just as Paramātmā, the Supersoul, is a temporarily manifested feature of the Lord, appearing only occasionally with the creation of the cosmos, so also, Śrī Guru's function as external representative of the Supersoul is a temporary or occasionally manifested affair. Similarly, preaching cannot really be said to be an eternal occupation of the Lord and His devotees. The function of Śrī Guru as pertaining to the eternal abode (*sanātana-dhāma*) as well as the activities or pastimes of the spiritual world are in the true sense *nitya* or eternal, whereas, although regularly resumed again and again with each successive cosmic creation, the pastimes unique to this realm, such as the birth of the Lord, the actual killing of demons, and even preaching to deliver fallen conditioned souls, should for all intents and purposes be seen as

naimittika or occasional *līlās*. Preaching through the medium of mass transcendental book distribution as we have seen in recent years does not exist in the spiritual world. It has temporarily manifested in this material world with the aid of the recently invented printing press and will continue only as long as "high-tech" accoutrements grace the face of our so-called "modern" technological civilization. The performance of *prema-rasa-maya-nāma-saṅkīrtana* for the Lord's pleasure, however, is an eternal function of the soul and is ever featured in the highest realm of Goloka. It should be noted with utmost interest and deference that it is this most powerful, eternal aspect of devotional service which has directly descended from Goloka Dhāma as the *yuga-dharma* for this terribly fallen age. Only when *prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana* descends to this dark material world does that eternal golden *saṅkīrtana* principle appear to assume a preaching demeanor as *hari-nāma-pracāra*. By such divine appearance of the loudly broadcasted *rāga-maya-mahā-mantra*, the brightest Holy Name and the darkest Kali-yuga display an extraordinary contrast, unseen within this world during previous ages. Thus this Age of Kali and the Holy Name enhance each other's value. Actually, however, it is the *rasika* relishment of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* which is the eternal occupation of the *jīva*. The highest preaching demeanor of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is circumstantially (temporarily) manifest according to time (Kali-yuga) and place (the material world). Mass transcendental book distribution is not the eternal occupation of the living entity, though when done in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it in every respect perfectly accords with the essential *saṅkīrtana* principle of pure devotional surrender, in keeping with its ultimately realizable internal *nitya-līlā* countertype.

The ultimate purpose of all "temporary," circumstantially manifested features of God, *guru*, and various utility-based forms of devotional service associated with this external field is to awaken our innate loving service tendency toward the eternally substantial parallel *nitya-līlā* features of *guru* and Godhead. The details of the featured forms change, whereas the essential

ideological substance remains perpetually intact. For example, in the worship of the *arcā-vigraha*, as found in this world, the *pūjārī*, when decorating the Deity, circumstantially needs to stick the Deity's rings and other ornaments on His limbs with the help of sticky substances like beeswax and Blu-tack. Undoubtedly, the idea of ornamenting the Lord's body is an eternal reality – but the use of Blu-tack? It is not enough to merely move on the temporarily useful physical platform, barring any internally reflective counterpart *nitya-līlā* notion about our externally corresponding pure-devotional engagements.

The culture of *hari-nāma-japa-yajña* is said to be a disciple's first and foremost essential obligation at the feet of Śrī Guru. Though apparently bearing a relatively small radius of *para-upakāra* audibility, a disciple's offenseless chanting of at least a fixed minimum number of Holy Names daily unquestionably constitutes the top-priority, most substantial service to Śrī Guru and his institution. In fact, the *guru* imposes no more imperative order than to regularly complete one's prescribed personal *japa-vrata*. Such is the incontrovertible status of *nāma-japa's* enormous significance. Personal absorption in *nāma-bhajana* is well ascertained to be a far more weighty devotional responsibility than a devotee's transcendental book distribution of any amount. Qualitative and quantitative increments in the chanting of *nāma-japa* appreciably augment one's personal purity. Moreover, *śuddha-nāma-japa* dynamically establishes one's internal spiritual link with Kṛṣṇa's *antaraṅga-śaktis*, through which alone one can ever hope to receive the empowerment required to effectually broadcast the Holy Name. In the same way, one should properly assess the collective value of congregational chanting. One must not witlessly underestimate, discount, or ignore the individual and communal spiritual worth and weightiness of earnestly executed *prema-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. It is not that because *kīrtana* performances done with *khol* and *karatāla* can be

heard for only a relatively short distance (as is even more so the case with *nāma-japa*) *śrī-hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* should be viewed dismissively or its concerted community performance should be in any way slighted or abandoned as if it were in some way outmoded. If such were the intention behind the instructions of any institutional founder in deference to the avail of the printing press, then perhaps, referring to the very scriptures so globally proliferated, we should by and large incisively question or even prudently decline the validity of such advice. *Nāma-japa* is the vital force and invigorator for the Vaiṣṇava individual. In the same way, *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is the spiritual strength, sustenance, and inspiration for the collective Vaiṣṇava community. Transcendental book distribution certainly boasts the capability of heroically broadcasting knowledge of pure devotional principles to the remotest corners of the world. It makes for a better mouse trap, so to speak, only in terms of the amplitude of the word's propagability. This, however, does not in any way pose to overshadow or diminish the greater relative importance of community-stimulating *nāma-saṅkīrtana* in terms of the latter's in-house value, any more than it would overshadow or diminish the spiritual worth and paramount consequence of the responsible completion of one's individually honored *nāma-japa-vrata*. Thus, when we say book distribution is "better" in terms of propagability, we should not misconstrue that to mean "better" or more important in terms of a clearly dissimilar reference point, namely the in-house value of communal *saṅkīrtana*.

No doubt, the dissemination of Vaiṣṇava philosophy via the medium of transcendental book distribution is for the classes (intelligentsia). Nonetheless, readily accessible Kṛṣṇa-conscious involvement and direct spiritual experience by way of purely and powerfully performed congregational hearing and chanting of the Holy Name is markedly elevating and enlivening for both the classes and the masses. It is not that because *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is said to be "for the masses" it is not also meant for the classes.

If anything, those who are intellectually fit to discuss the values of life should be able to gain a more profound philosophical grasp of the *saṅkīrtana* principle and quickly achieve *niṣṭhā* for its sublime application. Beyond that, the advanced inner circle, the *rasika* relishers of *līlā-kathā*, will most ably value the thing in the deepest manner. Direct, localized *saṅkīrtana* performances with *khol* and *karatāla* may not be so extensively audible in the world, having less potential global mobility than proliferated literatures. Still, on account of its special inspirational efficacy, far greater importance should be attached to the nourishing cultivation and maintenance of a strong individual and collective relishment and appreciation of eternally nectarous *śuddha-nāma-saṅkīrtana-rasa* within the Vaiṣṇava community (and beyond) than to the "business" of transcendental book distribution (*bṛhat-kīrtana*), notwithstanding the latter's useful, temporarily manifest far-extendable outreach. *Hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is not to be taken as a curiously quaint holiday novelty, a blast from the annals of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava history, something we anthropologically study about in the books. *Saṅkīrtana* (the congregational chanting of the Holy Name) is forever the life and soul of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. Faith in the process of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is the fundamental root of the tree of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the strength of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement – its essential foundation. If the foundation is weak – if the root is starved or rotten – then what outcome could we expect from the whole affair? The philosophy of half the hen . . . We want the golden eggs, but it's more economical if we don't have to feed the thing. And anyhow, *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* don't make no money! We have our huge establishments with their enormous attendant overhead expenditures to agonize about. $o . . . just pick it to the bone and bring it on home!

For years together, I have observed among many of the esteemed members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement (from top to bottom)

the regrettable misconceptions, oversight, sheer disinterest or total neglect surrounding the token importance (if any) assigned to the performance of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* within the society of devotees. I am thus compelled to humbly remind all concerned that this soul-stimulating, dynamically absorbing, congregational preaching mode of self realization, *nāma-saṅkīrtana-yajña*, should increasingly complement transcendental book distribution and all other aspects of devotional life with a serious view to bringing the bliss back into the lives of the bungling *bhaktas*. It is not that just because we have joined Lord Caitanya's *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* movement we therefore don't need to bother ourselves to go out on *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. How can we expect to get *ruci* for something we scarcely do? *Śuddha-nāma-kīrtana-ruci* is not so cheap that merely by official, institutionally regimented token gesture or lame lip-service we should expect to achieve the thing. We have to go deeper, beyond the call of duty, beyond the ceremonious filing in and filing out of the stipulated "temple programs." When Mother Yaśodā was trying to bind Bāla Kṛṣṇa to the grinding mortar, she was mystified to find that she was again and again two fingers short of success. One finger represents a devotee's steadfast extra endeavor; the other represents Kṛṣṇa's divine dispensation, His special mercy. Correspondingly, Śrī Hari Nāma Prabhu first wants to see our steadfast extra endeavor; then comes His special mercy. Alongside whatever other services we may be doing on any level, all of us, irrespective of organizational echelon, would do well to assiduously find or make the time to both privately and publicly do more *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* and see the long-lasting internal (personal/communal) and external (outreaching/*para-upakāra*) results. If our authorities disallow, discourage, disparage, or in any way hamper our focus on the performance of *yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, then they are not our authorities. If our *gurus* instruct us not to concentrate our energies and resources on the performance of *yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, then,

with all due respect, they are not our *gurus*. As Bali Mahārāja rejected the order of his *guru,* Śukrācārya, we should be prepared to similarly disobey the instructions of millions of "*gurus*" who in any way dissuade us from surrendering to the *yuga-dharma. Tṛnād api sunīcena . . . kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ.* What does it mean to have the genuine humility required to constantly and uncompromisingly adhere to the practice of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*? To unwittingly allow ourselves to be regressed to a state of infancy by the institutional manipulators of men and money, that they might conveniently maneuver us to advance their managerial agenda according to their whims via their artful appliance of the principles of child psychology, is not what is truly meant by "*tṛnād api sunīcena.*" The correct understanding is very simple; simple for the simple. Contextually implied by the proposed adoption of an attitude of humbleness is simply the seemliness in honestly admitting that we are fallen Kali-yuga creatures, having no qualification to achieve the goal of life by any means other than the process foreordained by the *śāstras* and propagated by the most merciful Lord Gaura as the only viable *dharma* for the deliverance of the fallen souls of this age, namely *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana.* Equally connoted is the spiritual integrity required to boldly stand up against all odds (*taror iva sahiṣṇunā*) and simply do what is right according to time (Kali-yuga) and circumstance (our fallen condition). In doing so, we should not unrealistically expect to be regarded as being fit for any other practice (*amāninā*), and we should respect (*māna-dena*) the true self-interest of other similarly fallen Kali-yuga creatures, in the matter of their attaining the fruit of *vraja-prema,* by encouraging them to also take up the *dharma* of the age. *Kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ* is not achieved by not doing *nāma-saṅkīrtana. Hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is the best and most powerful process for awakening one's taste and attachment for the Holy Name. One who fortunately gains authentic *śuddha-nāma-ruci* and intelligently amasses stockpiles of solid background experience in the matter of relishing the nectar

of *nāma-saṅkīrtana-rasa* will most likely never depart from the path of unalloyed devotional *bhajana*.

Without having the impulse to enthusiastically practice the religion of this age, *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, what Vaiṣṇava or Vaiṣṇavī can claim to have *śuddha-nāma-ruci*?

Without having extensively engaged in vigorous, daily prolonged performances of the *yuga-dharma*, *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, what Vaiṣṇava or Vaiṣṇavī can honestly claim to have ascended to the terrace of *prema*?

Without purposely promoting the daily promulgation of the *yuga-dharma*, *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, what devotional community can viably proclaim its intent to elevate its members to life's ultimate perfection?

Without deliberately stimulating and fostering the worldwide daily promulgation of the *yuga-dharma*, *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, what institution can claim to be truly representing the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu?

Distribute books. Distribute books. Distribute books. But who is reading the books? Read books. Read books. Read books – but not to be book-wormish. Book-worms go through page after page of a book (or perhaps many books), but to what avail? They superficially ingest mouthfuls only to witlessly defecate upon the very pages so ingested, remaining totally oblivious to the essential *rasa-maya* import of the *śāstras*. Without practically implementing by sensibly dedicating a substantial portion of life's time and energy to the direct performance of *yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* with a view to achieving the pinnacle of *rūpānuga-bhajana*, what individual or group of individuals can claim to have rightly comprehended and applied the devotional science enunciated in the scriptures proliferated by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* through disciplic succession?

When deeply considered from the standpoint of a *mādhurya-bhakta*, *hari-nāma-japa-yajña* can be likened to the most intimate

nikuñja-sevā of Yugala-kiśora. It is tantamount to Rādhe Śyāma's mercifully coming to personally accept one's solitary services and enjoy Their pleasure pastimes at one's own *kuñja*. *Saṅkīrtana-yajña* performed privately behind closed doors, as was done by Lord Gaurāṅga and company at Śrīvāsāṅgana, can be compared to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's more intimate *rāsa-līlā* relishment among Their inner circle of friends. Similarly, public *nagara-saṅkīrtana* smacks of the less intimate *mahā-rāsa-līlā* performances, where outsiders (rivals) and newcomers (*sādhana-siddhas*) are admitted. *Rāsa-līlā* delight (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*) essentially serves as a kind of foreplay, an "appetizer" to profoundly stimulate in both Kṛṣṇa and His beloveds a mutual attraction for more advanced, deeply amorous, most esoteric private conjugal pastimes (*nāma-japa*). The *rāsa-līlā* performances (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*) can never be complete or very meaningful without ultimately arousing the Lord's intensified passion for reciprocating the individual *gopīs*' desires for most confidential sequestered loving services (*nāma-japa*). Such consummate experience of the deepest personal reciprocation with the Lord naturally inspires His lovers to replay nightly the *rāsa* dance in such a way so as to further more and more intensified intimacy with Him again and again. Likewise, the consummate experience of genuine, unvitiated solitary absorption in *śuddha-nāma-japa* unsurprisingly promotes in a true *sādhaka* a powerful impetus to enthusiastically dance and chant in ever-inspirational *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* on a daily basis. Such is the synergic correlation between *nāma-japa* and *nāma-saṅkīrtana* that both reciprocally serve to enhance the value of one another. *Rāsa-līlā*, as a cooperative group effort to please the Lord, truly tests as well as reveals to Lord Kṛṣṇa the enchanting beauty and sweetness of the selfless loving service attitude of a *gopī* maidservant. As He sees and increasingly appreciates the beauty and purity of her unstinting, transcendentally altruistic *para-upakāra*-punctuated love, Kṛṣṇa naturally feels especially

inclined to intimately share Himself with her in ways otherwise unimaginable. Such beatified cognition of the extent of her beloved Lord and Lady's special mercy upon her own unique person naturally moves the *sakhī* to share her exhilaration with her confidential associates and maidservants. Without gaining the advanced experience of such intimacy, she would hardly have very much to impart to anyone. The proof of her advancement is seen in her redoubled purposeful compulsion, on the basis of her own loving ecstasies, to generously encourage others to embrace the same success formula as she embraced.

In other words, when Kṛṣṇa notices a *saṅkīrtana* devotee's concerted endeavors to magnanimously share the priceless treasure of Kṛṇṣa consciousness with others via the congregational chanting of the Holy Name, then from within He dynamically enhances to the profoundest degree an individual's personal confidential relishment of *hari-nāma-rasa* through the medium of *nāma-japa*. *Hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, when enthusiastically performed to satisfy *guru* and Gaurāṅga, dynamically dissolves any residual scraps of egocentricity within the heart of a pure devotional candidate, enabling one to deeply endear oneself in all intimacy to the Holy Name. When Hari Nāma Prabhu becomes attracted to the benevolence and sweetheartedness of a devotee, He becomes naturally inclined to constantly keep the devotee's company. Kṛṣṇa-nāma is an all-blissful, all-sentient person. We must always remember that love is a two-way street. Constant chanting of the Holy Name is a matter of mutual attraction. Love-birds of a feather flock together. It can never be a forced affair. The internal revelation of the beauty and sweetness of reciprocal loving *rādhā-kṛṣṇa-nāma-bhajana* certainly further enthuses a softhearted devotee to repeatedly share with others the nectar of the Holy Name through the medium of loud congregational chanting and dancing. When, as a pure-hearted *hari-nāma-bhajanānandī*, one dives into the ambrosial ocean of

hari-nāma-japa, one progressively surfaces in the nectarous ocean of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* – and then resurfaces with renewed strength, relish and realization in the ocean of *japānanda*. Thus, *Hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* dynamically promotes the selfless sacrificial service attitude essentially required for profoundest absorption in *vraja-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-nāma-bhajana*.

Although it is seen that self-sacrificing *śuddha-nāma-japa* and empowered *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* stand alternately as inspirational impetuses to each other, it must further be recognized that *nāma-bhajana* ultimately finds its loftiest, most exuberant exaltation in the loud congregational chanting of the Holy Name. This statement, made with reference to the consideration of the supramundane expansion of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental bliss, is not at all intended to undermine or sidestep the fundamental importance of an individual's regular chanting of *nāma-japa*. Rather, the intention is to illustrate how *nāma-bhajana* achieves magnified power from the interpersonal support gained by doing *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* in the association of saintly swan-like devotees. Analogously, the consummate union of the Divine Couple forms the central jewel in the necklace of all conjugal pastimes of the Lord. Nevertheless, *līlā-vilāsa*, as described in Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, though preludial to the impending fulfillment, the final conclusion of the whole affair (*samprayoga*), nevertheless transcendentally tantalizes the Lord with a pleasure far surpassing that of the ultimately achieved conjugal union itself. The appetizers are, in certain respects, transcendentally more powerfully stimulating and super-excellently flavorful than the forthcoming feast.

From another angle, it may be remembered that, in the course of Her pleasure pastimes, wherein Śyāma's happiness is the very foundation of Her own, Rādhā's personal endeavor to mercifully engage the other *sakhīs* rewards Her with a happiness far more relishable than the happiness derived from Her own

private meetings with Her beloved Lord. The simple truth is that Lord Kṛṇṣa is far more easily attracted, pleased, and conquered by the cooperative group effort to congregationally petition His benevolence upon an assembly of individuals through the process of *saṅkīrtana* than by an individual's solitary or separatistic endeavor. All these things are simply beyond material calculation and have to be appreciated and realized by practical *samādhi*, or pure devotional absorption. Any experienced self-sacrificing *kīrtanīyā* can positively attest to the greatly encouraging *ānanda-maya* influence and, even more, to the intensity of internal heartfelt spiritual enrichment noticed upon the sincere qualitative and quantitative performance of *nāma-saṅkīrtana-yajña*. It is for this reason that within the society of devotees more stress should be given to *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, in pursuit of an enhanced Kṛṣṇa conscious love, trust, and enlivenment among the groups of individuals who make up the society. Again I emphasize: As *hari-nāma-japa* is required for strengthening the individual devotee, so *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* is essential for strengthening, revitalizing, unifying, and purifying the Vaiṣṇava community. Moreover, such cooperative group endeavor to uplift and enliven the Vaiṣṇava community further synergically enhances the breadth and depth of the Kṛṇṣa conscious experience in the community's individuals.

If we sincerely desire to deepen and redouble our taste for chanting the Holy Name, then we would do very well to correctly comprehend and faithfully consign our intelligence to the instructions of our predecessor *ācāryas*, take shelter of Gaura-Nitāi, and simply **do more *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana***! If we recognize the enormous need to practically expand the ocean of transcendental fortune and bliss to touch the lives of other pious souls, in the matter of increasing and maintaining Kṛṣṇa's family of devotees, then we would surely do well to take shelter of Gaura-Nitāi and **do more *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana***! If we at all acknowledge the intermutual need to expedite the purification of our Vaiṣṇava relationships

then we would all do very well to concertedly take shelter of Gaura-Nitāi and **do more *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana***! If we seriously want to go well beyond the bodily concept of life, to realize the highest constitutional spiritual identity of the self (*vraja-svarūpa*), then we would do very well to set all worldly considerations aside, take shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and **do more *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana***! If we truly desire the perfection of the *vraja-bhāvas,* by which we could ever hope to attain the pleasure pastimes of the Lord in the topmost realm of Vraja, then we would do very well to **do more *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana***! If we at all see the need to expedite our progress to the terrace of *vipralambha-bhāva-mayavraja-prema* for the pleasure of *guru* and Gaurāṅga, in consonance with the very purpose of Their mission, then we would do very well to **do more *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*!** If we, honestly confessing any delinquency in the matter of its performance, sense a deficiency in the evolvement of our individual and collective pure devotional experience as regards insight, revelation, and realization, then we would, by all means, do very well to abandon all apprehensions about the thing and simply **do more *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana***! If we want the lifelong inspiration to carry on with our transcendental book distribution in a most viable way, then we would certainly do very, very well to **do more *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*** in order to deeply appreciate and enthusiastically share the very essence of what the books are, in so many words, purposely promoting! Given that we might, with a view to accomplish the as-yet-to-be-realized final half of Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission, deem the reestablishment of *varṇāśrama-dharma* in present-day human society to be of paramount importance, even still, we would do very, very well to intelligently put the horse before the cart and concertedly, all the world over**, do more mass *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*** – to practically increase the piety and spiritual consciousness of the masses in order to even hope to make possible that which is virtually impossible under the present so-called "for the people, by the people"

heinously roguish, demonic, world-domineering crime-syndicatecoerced corporatist puppet-governmental mis-leadership. Godless religio-racist multi-national corporate elitists and other hard-core, ruthless, *rākṣasa*-like terror-breathing global tyrants are not going to politely wait for us, the members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, to finally, all over the world, wake up to our inalienable right and responsibility to **do more and more mass *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*!** Institutional management has neither the authority to sanction nor the right to interdict or in any way inhibit the performance of the *yuga-dharma*. The will of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu ultimately pulls rank on institutional authority. Please remember that in Kali-yuga the Supreme Personality of Godhead descends from Goloka-dhāma to protect the *sādhus* and annihilate the demons by resoundingly manifesting as His Holy Name on the tongues of His pure devotees. The divine descent of *kali-yuga-kṛṣṇa-avatāra śrī-hari-nāma-rūpa* alone can effect the downfall of such stealthy, insidiously scheming, media-manipulating latter-day murderous war-money-mongering demons and carcass-devouring pseudo religionists of Kaṁsa's and Putana's class! Even if we prefer to pursue variant paths of spiritual perfection, or even if our all-consuming exigencies cannot go beyond the transitory urgency to put food on the table and give peace a chance, all the same, we would definitely do very, very well to have faith in the *yajña* for this age and simply **do more and more *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*!** Let us not wait until the fag end of life, when varieties of physical and mental decrepitude will render our bodies inoperative, to wisely recognize this principle. The urgency is enormous. *Jīva jāgo, jīva jāgo!* The time is now! Now is the time for revolution – a revolution of consciousness, a revolution of priorities – a reality check. All personal, communal, institutional, and inter-institutional devotional inadequacies, anomalies, and inequities – as well as all domestic, public, sociopolitical, governmental, and inter-governmental irregularities of

this age – can be positively surmounted simply by intelligently administering heavier, more frequent medicinal doses of life-giving *yuga-dharma śrī-hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Once again, if we're not part of the solution, we're part of the problem. We have busied ourselves over the years, trying so many other ideas. Why not sincerely concede to this one and be pleasantly surprised? We hardly expect to revamp the mental climate of an entire society. It is unlikely everyone will be genuine enough to rise to the occasion and seriously implement, but the faithful individuals who do will beyond a shred of doubt be recognized by Lord Caitanya and immensely benefited.

The proliferation of transcendental literature is certainly the best advertising front of the Kṛṇṣa consciousness movement. The idea is to canvass in such a way as to persuade human society's literate intelligentsia to join the fold of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement on the basis of convincingly sound reason and philosophy. If there is an Absolute Truth and that Absolute Truth is an eternal, all-sentient, all-blissful, all-attractive Person possessed of infinite transcendental forms, qualities, and pastimes exhibiting His unlimited beauty, knowledge, wealth, power, fame, and supreme independence, as can be glimpsed through the scriptures – then certainly His absolute, self-same Holy Names should be deemed most sublime, venerable, and worthy of our individual and congregational total deference and loving surrender. Transcendental book distribution can be compared to a *sakhī's* campaign to enlist new girls to become dedicated followers of Mahā-bhāva-svarūpiṇī, Śrī Rādhikā. Certainly, no book distributor in the line of Rūpa Gosvāmī would be caught dead canvassing on behalf of Candrāvalī! Rāga Mañjarī is perhaps the Lord's best and most reliable messenger, having opted to become His *vaṁśī* flute. Knowing the purposes of her *svāminī's* inner heart, Rāga Mañjarī serves, in the form of the flute, to mercifully break the resolve of Rādhā's *māna*, or jealous pouting,

forcefully facilitating the fruition of her mistress's deepest desires to intimately satisfy Her beloved Śyāma. She similarly serves to satisfy Rādhā's cupidity for expanding the sweet empire of Śyāma's amorous diversions, by artfully calling all the new *sādhana-siddha-gopīs* for *mahā-rāsa* at Vaṁśīvaṭa, near the Yamunā's shore. The *sādhana-siddha-gopīs*, possessed of their fully actuated *sac-cid-ānanda-siddha-deha* and the *adhikāra* for directly participating in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *prakaṭa-līlās,* having risen from the status of ordinary human beings, for the first time enter the sacrificial arena of confidential love dalliances with their beloved Lord through the Vaṁśīvaṭa "gateway" at the time of *mahā-rāsa*. It is said that Kṛṣṇa's flute, feeling acute pangs of separation from the Lord, manifested in Kali-yuga as Śrī Mṛdaṅga to participate in the Lord's *audārya-līlās*. The *mṛdaṅga* principle has expanded its influence by way of appearing as the *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga* printing press, which facilitates mass production and proliferation of Vaiṣṇava scriptures. Broadcasted *bhāgavata-kathā* by means of transcendental book distribution could, therefore, be suitably likened to the call of Kṛṣṇa's flute, which purposely serves to arouse intensified *pūrva-rāga*, or preliminary attraction in the hearts of the damsels of Vraja. The mercifully extended flute-call (book distribution) magnetically allures the *vraja-sundarīs* (fortunate souls) away from their so-called husbands (all superficially binding mundane considerations) to excitedly dash off to join the *rāsa* dance festivities (*hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*). Hence, they become progressively more and more qualified and inspired to enter deeply into the intimate *nikuñja-sevās* of the Divine Couple (*nāma-japa*). Again and again they anxiously hearken to the overtures of the flute (*bhāgavata-kathāmṛta*) and become ever-more-irresistibly enchanted. Again and again they skillfully shake the shackles of household encumbrances to ebulliently sing and dance in *rāsa-līlā* delight (*hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*) in order to transcendentally enrapture the Lord of all supramundane conjugal

beatitude. Again and again they blissfully receive and personally serve the Divine Couple at their private pleasure groves within the all-enchanting forest of Vraja (*hari-nāma-japa*).

What a disappointment! What a let-down! What a treachery! What a sham! If after so much canvassing, if after answering to so much flute-calling (transcendental book distribution), the excited *vraja-sundarīs* (*bhakta-gaṇa*) find, to their disillusionment, upon arriving at the *rāsa-maṇḍala* (the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement), no *rāsa-līlā* festival (invigorating, publicly demonstrated *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*)! If, upon reading the advertisements (Vaiṣṇava *śāstras*) and expectantly joining Lord Caitanya's *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* movement, having been philosophically persuaded to faithfully surrender to the idea of prosecuting the *yuga-dharma*, *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, one chances to notice a pitiful dearth of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* painfully persisting among the vast majority of the movement's members in most corners of the world, would one not wonder as to whether one had in fact actually found Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement of the Holy Name? Was it false advertising, or what? The *vraja-gopīs* were not satiated by *rāsa* dancing for the duration of an entire night of Brahmā. Similarly, anyone who has gained a grain of regard for *kali-yuga-dharma hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* would not very much appreciate the extent to which *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* has been side-lined and so irresponsibly de-emphasized over the years in Lord Caitanya's *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* movement. Advertising and advertising . . . but what in God's name are we advertising? Do we have any idea? Have we actually understood? Chanting, dancing, feasting, and philosophy. The philosophy in the books is basically to convince us to chant and dance. Feasting is to energize our chanting and dancing. Chanting and dancing is required for getting a taste for chanting and dancing. Chanting and dancing with a taste for chanting and dancing is actually required to progress to the position of ecstatically chanting and dancing on the stage of

preliminary love of Godhead, *bhāva-siddhi*. And chanting and dancing in spontaneous devotional ecstasy on the stage of *bhāva-siddhi* is an absolute prerequisite for chanting and dancing in Lord Caitanya's eternal *prema-saṅkīrtana-līlās* in the spiritual sky.

The current bustle about writing, publishing, distributing, and reading transcendental literatures expounding the science of Kṛṇṣa consciousness, though brilliantly facilitating the widespread inculcation of spiritual values upon the ignorant populace, is nonetheless a temporarily manifested, externally oriented phenomenon. Yet, it unquestionably finds its internal original timeless counterpart in the messenger services and *nāma-rūpa-guṇa-līlā-kathā* done by Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *nitya-parikara gopa* and *gopī* associates of Goloka Vṛndāvana. We must always remember that the real purpose of the scriptures' outreach is to advance a purified *rāga-mayī* inreach in both the receptive reader and the progressive preacher. The printing press can be considered a *rāga-marga* implement only to the extent that whatever is printed by the press actually promotes attraction to and deep attachment for the principles of *vraja-bhakti-bhajana*. A printing press in and of itself is not a *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*. If the press is hijacked by materialistic entrepreneurs to produce volumes and volumes of crow-infested-garbage-dump-like mundane novels, poetries, and porn, are we to laud the printing press as a *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*? Would it be at all unreasonable to suggest that the status of the printing press actually depends on the quality of the service rendered – the purpose for which the thing is being used? Human life is meant for purposefulness. Kṛṇṣa consciousness is like a razor's edge. If a razor is utilized as an instrument for shaving, then it serves its true purpose and may rightly be called a razor. Of course if the blade is dull like the wit of one unfit to ascertain the import of the *ācāryas*' observations regarding this point of discussion, we could hardly expect much success even it is professedly well used. If the blade is purposely used to slash another's jugular vein,

however, one might call it a razor, but in effect it is actually a lethal weapon. A *mṛdaṅga* exists to enhance the *kīrtana* of the Lord's Holy Names. If the *mṛdaṅga* is used to enhance mundane cinema songs, is it still to be deemed a *mṛdaṅga*? It may look like a *mṛdaṅga*, it may sound like a *mṛdaṅga*, but is it truly a *mṛdaṅga*? It is a *mṛdaṅga* in name only. Similarly, if the "preachers" of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement use the printing press to present volumes and volumes of articles exclusively moralizing on the all-importance of *varṇāśrama* and *vaidha-mārga* correctitudes, while evading, suspending, suppressing, disparaging, or altogether denouncing topics regarding the practical implementation of the principles of *rāga-marga-sādhana*, is their printing press still to be deemed an implement of *rāga-bhakti*? What makes using the genuine *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga* printing press a part of the *rāga-marga* process of devotional service is its use as a tool to propagate the principles of *rāga-bhakti*. If the press were to be used exclusively for the purpose of extolling the importance of *vaidhī bhakti*, without emphasizing *vidhi's* role in propping up the evolvement of *rāga*, it would no longer boast its pride of place on the path of *rāga*. Preaching can only be considered a symphonious feature of *rāga-marga-bhajana* if the aim of one's preaching is to progressively awaken a resolute greed for the ultimate attainment of *rāga-maya-prema* in the hearts of those to whom one preaches. Are there not innumerable "preachers" of various sectarian denominations tirelessly "preaching" their wearisome religio-moralistic dogmas dismally devoid of the slightest scent of even the least of Vṛndāvana's flowers? Are their rapturous preach-preachidy-preachments to be regarded as *rāga-marga-bhakti*? Compassion serving any objective other than the arousal of the *jīva's* dormant highest potential *ānanda-maya* eligibility for culturing the superlative moods of Vraja can hardly be deemed compassion at all. We may call it compassion on one level or another, but such so-called compassion, whether materially or spiritually directed,

may be compared to throwing a parched and gasping fish into a mirage, tossing bread crumbs to a pent-up freedom-loving bird in a cage, donating a nickel to an impoverished ex-billionaire, giving a starving man a luxuriant flower garland, or offering a dying man a million dollar coffin. Alternatively, there are others, well equipped with esoteric *śāstric* data, who fraudulently make a show of preaching *rāga-marga-bhakti* in the world to satisfy their self-establishing lust for *lābha*, *pūjā*, and *pratiṣṭhā*. Is their preaching to be regarded as instrumental to anyone's *rāga-marga-bhajana*? Once again, we scrutinize the mind-set that backs our activities in "Kṛṣṇa consciousness" – our purity of purpose.

In truth, no external action – preaching, book publication, book distribution, *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, *nāma-japa*, *sādhu-saṅga*, *vṛndāvana-vāsa*, *arcanā*, *prasāda-sevā*, pot-washing, or whatever – can be considered an aspect of either *ajāta-ruci-* or *jāta-ruci-rāgānuga-sādhana* if it is not prompted by a greed to attain the perfection of one's *abhīṣṭa-vraja-bhāva*. If one does not recognize within oneself a specific attraction to any one of Kṛṣṇa's *nitya-parikara vraja-bhāva* exemplars – if one does not have a desired *bhāva* – then there is no question of one's external engagements in devotional service being prompted by an innate *lobha*, owing to *lobha's* non-appearance. Hence, one's devotional activities can never be accepted as *nija-abhīṣṭa-bhāva-maya*, *-sambandhi*, *-anukūla*, *-aviruddha*, or even *-viruddha*, for that matter, simply because there is no *nija-abhīṣṭa-bhāva* reference point involved to merit the consideration of such judgments. If one has neither the prerequisite *lobha* nor the inclination toward relevant internal devotional absorption, the very substance that establishes one's eligibility to pursue the path of *rāga*, and if one feels no urgency, upon the escalation of such *lobha*, to propagate *rāga-marga-bhakti* in the world as per the will of the Lord, then one may preachidy-preach till one is blue in the face or distribute innumerable volumes and volumes of transcendental literatures till the cows come home and still one's actions will never

be deemed any sort of *rāga-marga-sādhana* nor will they engender *rāga-marga-bhāva* as their direct outcome. One could hardly expect to gain the outcome of *rāgānuga-sādhana* on the strength of one's external devotional engagements if the inward and outward features of one's devotional performances do not assume *rāga-marga* characteristics. If a *sādhaka's* action is prompted merely by *śāstra-vidhi* and *guru's* order, then such action, however enthusiastic, is to be relegated to a status no loftier than *vaidha-mārga-sādhana*, *āropa-siddha-bhakti*, or perhaps *niṣkāma-* or even *sakāma-karma-yoga*, depending on the quality of the motivation involved. Reverential *vaidhika* devotion (*maryādā bhakti*) done with earnest enthusiasm (*utsāha*) at the stages of *ruci*, *āsakti*, or even *bhāva*, for that matter, also cannot be rightly deemed the cultivation of *rāga-bhakti* by dint of the performer's lack of greed for achieving the *mādhurya* sentiments of the Vrajavāsīs. For the deserving *lobha-maya-sādhaka*, however, who unpretentiously endeavors to conscionably cultivate the moods of Vraja, differentiating between favorable and unfavorable practices while inwardly musing upon the eternal *vraja-līlā* archetype features of all culturally transfigured varieties of external devotional engagement, practically anything done as well as any apparatus employed to internally or externally advance Lord Gaurāṅga's mission to flood the world with *vraja-bhakti-rasa* can be accepted as an influential part and parcel of the *rāga-marga* dimension, commensurate with the individual's measure of unalloyed devotional progress.

Much of the paraphernalia diversely utilized in "modern-world" Kṛṣṇa consciousness (automobiles, jet airplanes, amplifiers, computers, cameras, printing presses, cell phones, audio/video recording and broadcasting devices, refrigerators, gas burners, electric blenders, neon lights, singing alarm clocks, disposable diapers, etc., etc.) may be circumstantially accepted in the attempt to facilitate or expedite the solid external preaching progress of the Kṛṇṣa consciousness movement, but in the end it would

be preposterous to think that we could take these temporarily useful accoutrements with us when we go to the spiritual world. No doubt, as long as the present-day oil-based techno-industrial "civilization" holds up, we really ought to take full advantage of all these gorgeous Kali-yuga arrangements as far as possible. We must, however, scrupulously avoid the inanity of becoming unnecessarily attached to or reliant upon the service methodologies and preaching paradigms generated by the inclusion of these various external trappings, to the point of spinelessly minimizing or even blindly excluding the essential internal culture of *rādhākṛṣṇa-prema-bhakti-rasa* through the eternally viable process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Although we should doubtlessly make our lifelong plans for disseminating Kṛṣṇa consciousness though the medium of transcendental book distribution, we should not naively overlook the inevitability of various God-sanctioned upheavals in material nature. The sudden demise of our demonic technologically "advanced" "civilization" is not a karmic impossibility. If such were to occur at any time, we would hardly expect to see the continued feasibility of mass book distribution as we know it today. Will we be left with our gas-tanks empty, our book-bags empty, our piggy banks empty, our minds empty, our hearts empty, our lives empty, and our mouths empty – having never gained a tangible taste or attachment for the congregational chanting of the Holy Name? Will such a fate ever force us to finally acknowledge (by default) the sublime shelter of *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*? All of our computers will have long since crashed. No more e-mail! No more Internet! No more television! No more printing press! No more newspapers! Damn, man. None of our mp3 players and iPods will sing for us anymore! You mean we'll have to do it ourselves? We may have to close the temples. We may lose our cozy *āśrama* habitats. We may have to live – and die – under the trees! But despite the extreme miseries of life, we must never desist from our determination to chant the Holy Name of Kṛṇṣa, though we are hardly able.

Anyway, as you ramble on through life, dear reader, whatever fancy be your goal, keep your eyes upon the doughnut and not upon the hole! Kali-yuga is an ocean of innumerable hole-like faults. Yet, there is one tremendous redeeming doughnut-like quality – *saṅkīrtana* of the Holy Name of Kṛṇṣa. Again I assert, the Holy Name is the living embodiment of all spiritual *rasas* (*caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ*). "There is nothing but the Holy Name to be had in the fourteen worlds." So, "Take shelter of the Holy Name as your only business." Be proactive. Don't procrastinate. Don't think these words to be mere cliché or *sampradāyic* platitudinous mumbo-jumbo. *Harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam . . .* "Don't think this chanting and dancing will not lead to the desired goal. It will!" – If you do it! I speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me Kṛṣṇa! . . . So help me Gaura! . . . So help me Śrīla Prabhupāda!

I have no knowledge; I'm no scholar and I have no devotion. I am not a Bhaktivedanta. I'm not even a Bhakti-śāstrī. I'm not a Bhakti-anything. For all the decades of whatever little sorry service I have managed to muster to the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, I have never really ever amounted to very much. Moreover, how very meager is my every kind of so-called *sādhana*! All my endeavors are fraught with a myriad of imperfections. Practically, I have no recourse, no other hope, no other *sādhana* than to pitifully cry for the special causeless mercy of the Lord and His devotees. I continue to stand as an insignificant very low-class so-called disciple of a very high-class *guru*. Indeed, fool that I am, I have not even the slightest remorse for that. Still, by the grace of my beloved spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, within me has somehow grown an exceptionally profound regard and attachment for Kṛṣṇa's Holy Name. Without pretence, I beg my esteemed readers to mercifully bless me with even so much as a (*vraja-dhūli*) dust particle of *rāga-mayī* loving service to the Holy Name, which ever-exaltedly reigns as *the heart of transcendental book distribution*.

My dear most love-worthy and merciful Rādhā-Śyāmasundara! I end these effusive outpourings in the dust of Your lotus feet on this fifteenth day of August, 2009, corresponding to the one hundred twenty-third sacred appearance day anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda in the year Gaurābda 523 at the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira, situated in the blissful, wish-fulfilling pleasure sands (Ramaṇa-reti) of Your resplendent land of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma. May the broad-minded, forward-thinking souls evermore respect these deliberations, which are replete with profound concerns for advancing a more progressive culture of *antaraṅga-bhakti* in the lives of Your seriously dedicated *saṅkīrtana* devotees. Please let those essence-seeking, deeply introspective, softhearted individuals who patiently and sincerely read or hear these verbose utterances very soon attain the highest transcendental happiness (*paramānanda*) in the spontaneous loving service of Your lotus feet according to their innermost heart's aspirations.

Oṁ Tat Sat!

Please greedily chant

HARE KṚṢṆA

HARE KṚṢṆA

KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA

HARE HARE

HARE RĀMA

HARE RĀMA

RĀMA RĀMA

HARE HARE

from the heart – and be happy!

Appendix

Meaning of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahā-Mantra

HARE: O Rādhe! Mistakenly leaving aside the shelter of Your soft lotus feet, I have come to this world to suffer unbearable material pangs and continuously offend You. Please forgive me.

KṚṢṆA: O Kṛṣṇa! You are the supreme husband, attractive to all living entities. I surrender at Your lotus feet. Please grant me the matchless gift of Your unalloyed devotional service and mitigate the piercing pain of our separation.

HARE: O Rādhe! Now, abjuring the worldly vanity of male egoism, I beg to eternally remain as Your female friend and maidservant in the land of Vraja. You are my supreme goddess and the mistress of my heart. Please uplift me and protect me.

KṚṢṆA: O Kṛṣṇa! You are unlimitedly handsome and thus naturally enchant the hearts of all young girls. Please accept me as a maidservant of Your maidservant's maidservant.

KṚṢṆA: O cupid of Vṛndāvana! You are Rādhārāṇī's *priyatama* and my *priyatama* also. I offer my everything to You. Please accept me and be satisfied with whatever little I can offer.

KṚṢṆA: O cunning boy! Is it to Your liking to neglect me? Please don't discourage my long-cherished desire to have You as my supreme husband.

HARE: O Rādhe! Please tell about me to Your Kṛṣṇa and pacify my heart.

HARE: O Rādhe! Please save me!

HARE: O Rādhe! You are very merciful to Your devotees. Please shower unprecedented mercy upon me, Your insignificant maidservant.

RĀMA: O Rādhikā-ramaṇa! O Śyāma! You are pleased by devotion to Your devotees. Please find some reason to be pleased with me and shower me with Your special causeless mercy.

HARE: O Rādhike! Your pleasure pastimes are unfathomable! Please accept me as Your own and engage me in any fitting service as You please.

RĀMA: O lover boy! Why are You looking at me like that? There are millions of girls much more beautiful than me in this land of Vraja.

RĀMA: O debauchee number one! Don't touch the delicacies! Do You think we are up for grabs? Don't think we can be gotten so easily.

RĀMA: O You nonsense! Let go of my sari! Get back! Stop grabbing me!

HARE: *He* Rādhe! Your lover is incorrigible! Please subdue Him with Your infinite charms.

HARE: O Rādhe! Please save me!

Glossary

A

hāsa-nāma—the semblance of the Lord's name.

Abhidheya-vicāra—consideration of appropriate devotional practices by which one may attain the ultimate perfection (*prayojana-siddhi*), *prema-bhakti*.

Abhijita-muhūrta—the eighth *muhūrta* of the day (12:09 pm – 12:33 pm Vṛndāvana standard time).

Abhisāra—a lover's journey to meet the beloved.

Ācārya-paramparā—a disciplic succession of fully self-realized spiritual masters who teach by practical example.

Ācārya-svarūpa—the form of the spiritual master seen in this world.

Ācārya-vāṇī—the words of a spiritual master who practices what he preaches.

Adharāmṛta-prasāda—*prasāda* infused with nectar directly from Kṛṣṇa's lips.

Adhikāra—devotional eligibility.

Ādi-vrajavāsīs—original eternal Vrajavāsī associates of Kṛṣṇa.

Ādya-śakti—unprecedented, original internal spiritual potency – Śrī Rādhā.

Aiśvarya-jñāna-mayī—consisting of knowledge of the Lord's opulence.

Aiśvarya-maya mantra—a *mantra* imbued with a sense of the Lord's opulence and grandeur.

Ānanda-maya—endowed with or consisting of transcendental bliss.

Antaraṅga-bhaktas—internally oriented devotees.

Antaraṅga-bhakti—internal devotional service.

Antaraṅga-śaktis—internal spiritual potencies.

Antaraṅga-vraja-bhakti-bhajana—worship performed internally in consonance with the principles of *vraja-bhakti*.

Apasiddhāntic—based on wrong conclusions.

Aparādha-nāma—the offended name of the Lord.

Aprākṛta-bhāva—transcendental ecstatic emotion.

Artha-pravṛtti—engagement in transcendental affairs.

Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-smaraṇa-sevā—internal devotional service performed through remembrance of the eightfold daily pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the land of Vraja.

Audārya-līlās—the pastimes of Lord Gaurāṅga in which He humbly accepts the roles of His devotees to more deeply appreciate the intensity of their love and to more effectively teach the process of unalloyed devotional surrender to the fallen conditioned souls.

B

Bhāgavata-dharma—the transcendental eternal function of the living being – service to the Supreme Lord in accordance with the conclusions of *Śrīmād-Bhāgavatam*.

Bhāgavata-sampradāya—the school through which the teachings of *Śrīmād-Bhāgavatam* are disseminated.

Bhāgavata-siddhānta—the ultimate conclusion of *Śrīmād-Bhāgavatam*.

Bhajana-kuṭīras—cottages for performing personal devotional service.

Bhajanānandī—a devotee who experiences *ānanda* in personally worshiping the Lord's names, forms, qualities, and pastimes.

Bhakty-unmukhī sukṛti—pious activities that give rise to pure devotion.

Bhāra-vāhī—burden-bearing, with reference to 1) those materially encumbered by superfluous ephemeral goals under the gross bodily concept of life or 2) those who, like beasts of burden, feel the weight of regulative devotional practice as a great drudgery.

Bhauma-līlās—earthly pastimes.

Bhāva-deha—the spiritual mental body comprised of perfect supra-mundane emotions.

Bhāva-grāhī janārdana—Lord Kṛṣṇa who appears before His devotee in response to the devotee's desire to see Him in a particular way.

Bhāvāpana-daśā—the stage of attaining *bhāva*.

Bhāva-siddhi—the perfection of one's desired ecstatic devotional mood in one of the five primary *rasas* (*śānta*, *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *śṛṅgāra* or *mādhurya*) – the attainment of *bhāva*.

Bhāvollāsa-rati—the love of a maidservant in which the ecstatic moods of the *yūtheśvārī* (*gopī* group-leader) awakens within her heart producing intense joy.

Bhoga-mandira—the kitchen in which the Lord's meals are prepared.

Bhogya-darśana—exploiting the audience of the guru for self-aggrandizement.
Bhukti-kāmī—one possessed of desire for sense enjoyment.

C

Candra-śālikā—a turret atop a *gopī's* palace specially meant for viewing the moon (Kṛṣṇacandra). Alternatively, it may be understood in this sense: a turret atop the palace ascended by the *gopī*s to give Kṛṣṇacandra an opportunity to view the beauty of their moon-like faces.
Candrika—(sometimes called *keri*) an ornament shaped like a small mango worn like a crown.

D

Dāna-keli—a pastime in which Kṛṣṇa extemporaneously extorts various amorous tolls from the *gopīs* along a footpath at the base of Govardana Hill.
Dharma-dhvajīs—people who wave the flag of religion but who are actually hypocrites.
Duskṛti—impiety.

E

Ekādaśa-bhāva—the eleven aspects of one's *vraja-svarūpa*: name (*nāma*), complexion or form (*rūpa*), age (*vayas*), dress (*veśa*), relationship (*sambandha*), group (*yūtha*), order (*ājñā*), service (*sevā*), divine cherished ambition (*parākāṣṭhā*), maintainer (*pālyadāsī.*) and residence (*nivāsa*).

G

Gaṇeśvarī—*sakhī* party-leader under a particular *gopī* group leader.
Gopa-bālakas—cowherd boys.
Goṣṭhy-ānandī—a devotee who experiences *ānanda* by sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness with the greater family of living entities.
Gulāla—a fragrant powder made from flower pollen.
Guñjā-mālā—a necklace of white, red-black, or alternating white and red-black berries of the *guñjā* creeper.
Guru-dakṣiṇā—a disciple's tribute (often in the form of money) to the spiritual master.

Guru-rūpa-sakhī—the eternal *kiṅkarī-svarūpa* of the spiritual master as a maidservant of Śrī Rādhikā.
Guru-tattva—the *guru* principle.

H

Hāsya-rasa—mellow of uproarious laughing.
Hari-dāsa-varya—the best of Lord Harī's devotees.

I

Īśvara-bhāva—the mood of being a controller.

J

Jaiva-dharma—the eternal function of the *jīva*.
Jāta-rati—one in whom *rati* has awakened.
Jāta-ruci—one in whom *ruci* has awakened.

K

Kaitava-bhaktas—cheating "devotees."
Kajjala—black eyeliner.
Kali-cela—disciple of Kali-yuga's influences.
Kāma-yantra-tilaka—*tilaka* in the shape of Cupid's mystic symbol, having a small dot of red *kuṅkuma* in the center surrounded by eight short *candana* lotus petals and encircled by a thin black line of musk.
Kaniṣṭha-bhakta (Kaniṣṭha-adhikārī)—a devotee of the lowest order, generally under the sway of material influences and therefore possessed of pliable faith.
Karma-yoga—linking with Godhead through either the sacrifice of one's actions or the sacrifice of the fruits of actions, either with or without a desire to enjoy the results of sacrifice.
Kastūrī—musk. Candana-yātrā
Kevala-madhurya rāga-maya mantra—a *mantra* purely possessed of the power to augment attraction for the unadulterated sweetest loving characteristics exclusively attributable to the realm of Vraja.
Kevala-mādhurya-premika—possessed of pure *prema* based on Kṛṣṇa's sweetness (uncontaminated by knowledge of the Lord's grandeur).
Kila-kiñcita—an ecstatic mood symptomatizing great internal jubilation upon meeting Kṛṣṇa, wherein a heroine exhibits a bouquet of concurrent

natural transcendental expressions like pride, intense desire, envy, fear, and anger, along with simultaneous laughing and crying, knitted eyebrows, shrinking away, horripilation, and other such supramundane exhilarations.

Kiṅkarī—maidservant.

Kiṅkiṇī—small bells.

Kīrtana-kārīs—*kīrtana* performers.

Kiśora—an adolescent boy between ten and fifteen years of age.

Kiśorī-gopī—an adolescent *gopī* between ten and fifteen years of age.

Kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ—having performed many lifetimes of pious activities (see *Bhāgavatam* 10.12.11).

Kuṭṭamita—when a heroine puts on an outward show of anger, although inwardly pleased by her gallant's bold advances.

L

Lābha, pūjā, and pratiṣṭhā—profit, adoration, and distinction.

Līlā-vilāsa—transcendental foreplay.

Lobha-maya-śraddhā—faith (*śraddhā*) possessed of greed (*lobha*) to attain the moods of the Vrajavāsīs.

Lobha-maya-śraddhāvān jana—persons endowed with *lobha-māya-śraddhā*.

M

Madhyama-adhikārī—an intermediate practicing devotee.

Mahā-bhāgavata—a swan-like devotee of the highest order.

Mahā-rāsa—the *rāsa* dance in which all the different kinds of *gopīs* are allowed to participate.

Mahīmā-jñāna-yukta-prema—*prema* accompanied by knowledge of the Lord's grandeur.

Maṅg-tika—an ornament placed upon a lady's hair-part, often flanked with decorative chains attached to the hair on both sides of her head.

'Mukhyā'-vraja-janas—the preeminent eternal Vrajavāsī associates of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Muktā-carita-kathāmṛta—the nectar of talks about the pastimes in which Kṛṣṇa grew pearl trees.

Mukti-kāmī—one possessed of desire for liberation.

N

Nāgara—amorous hero.

Nagara-saṅkīrtana—*saṅkīrtana* performed in the public places of a village or town.

Nija-abhīṣṭa-bhāva—one's own desired supramundane mood **-maya**—absorption in, **-sambandhi**—connecting to, **-anukūla**—favorable for, **-aviruddha**—not against, **-viruddha**—against.

Nikuñja-līlās—intimate pastimes in secluded forest groves.

Nikuñja-sevās—services to the *nikuñja-līlās*.

Niṣkiñcana bhajanānandīs—devotees without any material possessions who take pleasure in performing personal devotional service.

Nitya-dharma—the ultimate intrinsic (eternal) nature of the soul.

Nitya-līlās—eternal pastimes of the Lord.

Nitya-muktāvatāra—an emancipated *sādhana-siddha* or *kṛpā-siddha* who returns from the spiritual world to the material world for preaching on the Lord's behest.

Nitya-parikara—eternal entourage.

Nitya-siddha avatāra—an eternally perfect devotee who descends from the spiritual world to assist in the Lord's mission.

Nitya-sukṛti—indelible transcendental piety.

P

Pālya-dāsī—a maidservant who is always maintained and protected by her *gopī* mistress.

Pañca-saṁskāra—the five purificatory rituals.

Parā bhakti—real, highly evolved spontaneous devotion.

Para-duḥkha-duḥkhī—one who is distressed to know of the distress of others.

Pāraka—the spiritual potency that bestows *kṛṣṇa-prema* and situates one as an eternal resident of the *dhāma*.

Parakīya-bhāva—a *gopī's* mood of unfortunately belonging to another (her lawful husband) while remaining attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the supreme husband), her paramour.

Paramahaṁsa-nirjana-bhajanānandīs—greatly elevated swan-like devotees who avoid the materialistic masses in order to deeply absorb themselves in undisturbed, concentrated internal worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's eightfold daily pastimes.

Pāramārthika—related to the supreme goal.
Para-upakāra—doing good for others.
Prakaṭa-līlās—pastimes of the Lord manifested on earth.
Prakṛta-bhaktas—materialistic devotees.
Prāṇa-sakhī—a girlfriend as dear to Rādhārāṇī as Her own life (one of the five kinds of *sakhīs* described in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, particularly characterized by her greater affection for Rādhārāṇī than for Kṛṣṇa).
Prasannātmā—joyful soul.
Prema-keli—love play.
Premāmṛta—the nectar of *prema*.
Prema-rasa-maya-nāma-saṅkīrtana—*nāma-saṅkīrtana* endowed with the relishable mellows of *prema*.
Prema-rurukṣu—those who earnestly strive for ascending to the region of *prema*.
Prema-sevā—loving service.
Premika—possessed of *prema*.
Prīti-bhajana—loving devotional service.
Priya-narma-sakhā—a younger, most confidential boyfriend of Kṛṣṇa.
Priyatama—most dear beloved one.
Puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa—male ornament.
Pūrva-rāga—preliminary attraction (with the hope of meeting the beloved).

R

Rādhā-rasa-bhāvita—imbued with the nectar mellows of Rādhā's sweetness.
Rāga-margābhidheya—the activities to be performed on the path of spontaneous devotional service.
Rāga-mārgānugamana-prema-dharma—the religion of love for Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa following the path of natural spontaneous attraction.
Rāga-maya-mahā-mantra—a *mantra* that awakens natural attraction (*rāga*) following in the wake of the Vrajavāsīs' spontaneous loving sentiments toward Kṛṣṇa.
Rāga-māyī—endowed with spontaneous attraction.
Rāgānuga-bhāva—*bhāva* achieved through the process of *rāgānuga-bhakti*.
Rāgātmikā—one whose *ātmā* is imbued with *rāga* – complete, overwhelming attraction with an indelible thirst to selflessly serve

Lord Kṛṣṇa exclusively for His and His devotees' absolute pleasure. A characteristic ontological feature of the original counterpart eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa as well as of those who, as emancipated *jīvas*, attain a similar status in the association of Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates.

Rasa-vicāra—analysis of *rasa*.

Rasika—one who has advanced to the level of relishing *rasa*.

Raso vai saḥ—an emporium of varieties of flowing mellows.

Rūpānuga-dharma—the religion of the followers of Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Rūpānuga-sampradāya—the school of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism following and propagating the teachings of Śrīlā Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Rūpa-sanātanānuga—follower of Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī.

S

Sac-cid-ānanda-siddha-deha—perfect spiritual body comprised of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

Sādhu-bhūṣaṇa—saintly qualities.

Sādhu-saṅga—association with pure-hearted saintly devotees.

Sad-guru—one's eternal spiritual master.

Sakhī-snehādhika—a girlfriend who has more affection for her group leader than for Kṛṣṇa.

Sambandha-abhidheya-prayojana-vicāra—deliberation on the principles of relationship with the Personality of Godhead (*sambandha*); activities leading to the realization of perfect reciprocation with Kṛṣṇa in terms of that relationship (*abhidheya*); and the ultimate necessity (*prayojana*), the perfection of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Sambhogecchāmayī—an aspect of *kāmānuga-bhakti* (*rāgānuga-bhakti* in the *mādhurya-rasa*) in which a devotee cultivates the mood of a *nāyikā*, or mistress, characterized by a purposeful desire for one's own independent supramundane conjugal union with the Lord, keeping exclusively His pleasure in view.

Sampradāyic siddhānta—a school's ultimate conclusion.

Saṅga-kīrtana—congregational chanting, *saṅkīrtana*.

Saṅketa-kuñja— a *kuñja* appointed as a meeting place.

Sāra-grāhī—a devotee who relishes drinking the essence of unalloyed devotion.

Śaraṇāgati—pure devotional surrender.

Śāstra—Vedic scripture.
Śayana-mandira—sleeping-temple (bedroom).
Siddha-deha—perfect spiritual body.
Sindūra—red vermilion.
Śiṣya-prāya—the mere semblance of a disciple.
Sneha-saṁyukta-nāma-saṅkīrtana—when, out of deep affection for Nāmī (Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa) coupled with keen aspiration to attain the *prema-sevas* of Their lotus feet, one concentratedly engages one's mind, body, and voice in loudly singing the Holy Names of the Lord.
Śravaṇa-daśā—the period of acquaintance through the devotional process of hearing.
Śṛṅgāra—another name for the *mādhurya-rasa.*
Sthāyi-bhāva—permanent ecstatic emotional disposition (in one of the five primary *rasas*).
Śuddha-nāma—the pure Divine Name, identical to Kṛṣṇa Himself.
Śuddha-sattvika—having the spiritual nature of pure goodness.
Su-dūra-pravāsa—feelings of intense separation when Kṛṣṇa leaves Vṛndāvana to take up residence in a far-distant place (Mathurā and on to Dvārakā).
Sukṛti—piety.
Svādhīna-bhartṛkā—one whose lover is under Her control.
Svāminī—mistress.
Svānanda-kāmī—one possessed of desire for one's own spiritual bliss.
Svara-maṇḍalikā-vīṇā—a thirty-six-stringed harp-like instrument belonging to the family of *vīṇās.*
Svarūpa-śakti—the Lord's personal internal spiritual potency.
Svayaṁ-rūpa—the original form of Godhead, Rādhārānī's Kṛṣṇa, who exhibits one hundred percent of the Lord's beauty, sweetness, and lovableness, in contrast to the less attractive expanded forms of Godhead.
Śyāma-rasa—the liquid mellows of Śyāma's sweetness.

T

Tad-bhāvecchātmikā—an aspect of *kāmānuga-bhakti* (*rāgānuga-bhakti* in the *mādhurya-rasa*) following in the wake of the *sakhīs'* service attitude in which the devotee takes the greatest pleasure in creating favorable

conditions for the *prema*-union of the Divine Couple, in contrast to one cherishing a desire for one's own independent supramundane conjugal union with the Lord. This is considered the preeminent, primary path of *kāmānuga-bhakti*.

Tāraka—the spiritual potency that delivers the conditioned soul from material bondage.

Tāraka-brahma kīrtana-mantra—a *kīrtana-mantra* comprised of transcendental nomenclature imbued with the *tāraka* potency.

U

Unnatojjvala-vraja-rasa—the most resplendent mellow of Vraja – the amorous love of the maidservants of Śrī Rādhā.

Upādhi—false designation.

Upa-mañjarī—the "other" *mañjarī* second-in-command (in a particular *sakhī*'s group).

Utkaṇṭhitā—eager to meet her lover.

Uttama-vaiṣṇava (Uttama-adhikārī)—a pure devotee of the highest order at the stage of perfection.

V

Vaidha-sādhana—rudimentary devotional practices strictly by the book.

Vāma-giri—a mountain of contrariness.

Vāma-madhyā—a left-wing *gopī* whose qualities place her midway between the *prakharā* ("harsh girl") and *mṛdvī* ("soft, gentle girl").

Vana-devī—forest goddess.

Vana-vihāra-līlā—the pastime of enjoying roaming in the forest.

Varaṇa-daśā—the interval during which one comes to the position of accepting as fitting the revelations concerning one's eternal spiritual identity (*svarūpa*) in terms of the eleven aspects of the internally conceived *siddha-deha*.

Vasanta-rāga—springtime melody.

Vastu-siddhi—the ultimate perfection of gaining Kṛṣṇa's direct shelter upon achieving the actuation of one's supra-substantial *sac-cid-ānanda siddha-deha* (perfect spiritual body) in the *bhauma-līlās* of the Lord.

Vibhinnāṁśa-jīvas—infinitesimal, eternally separated living beings.

Vibhūtis—opulences.

Vilāsa-kuñja—pasime grove.

Vipralambha-mahā-bhāva—the pinnacle of *prema* in feelings of separation, manifesting the transcendental *divyonmāda* emotional outpourings *prajalpa, parijalpa, vijalpa, ujjalpa, sañjalpa, avajalpa, abhijalpa, ājalpa, pratijalpa and sujalpa.*

Vipralambha-rasa-maya—that which is imbued with mellows of love in separation from the beloved.

Vraja-bhakti-rasa—the mellow of devotional service in Vraja.

Vrajādhipā—empress of Vraja.

Vraja-dhūli—dust of Vṛndāvana.

Vraja-prema-bhakti-rasa—the devotional mellow characteristic of a Vrajavāsī's love for Kṛṣṇa.

Vraja-svarūpa—one's own ultimate constitutional spiritual form as a devotee of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the realm of Vraja.

Y

Yukta-vairāgya—renunciation of the false notion that anything of this world belongs to or is to be enjoyed by anyone other than Lord Kṛṣṇa, practically demonstrated by engaging (*yukta*) that which belongs to Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇa's service.

Yūtheśvārī—*gopī* group-leader.

The great necessity in the foward march of any growing religio-cultural institution is to recognize, encourage, responsibly guide, and positively facilitate the inner spiritual development of the society's progressive pure devotional aspirants. This treatise strives in its own unique way to inspire a revolution of understanding. It attempts to deepen the self-searching thoughtfulness essentially required to bridge the apparent dichotomy between a *sādhaka's* inward *bhajana* and outward preaching by illustrating the relative importance of each, as well as their interrelation. Those fortunate souls who absorb intimately this message will find the pathway to the highest regions of *kṛṣṇa-prema* clearly open to them, whereas those unfortunates who turn from this message, preferring to attach themselves to shallow, self-aggrandizing materialistic modes of devotion, will find their path plagued with obstruction. We sincerely hope to at least touch the hearts of a fortunate few. That alone would be the hallmark of our success and a source of immense satisfaction.